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B. C. DUMORTIER.

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BELGIUM
AND THE
TWENTY-FOUR ARTICLES:

BY
CHARLES WHITE, ESQ.

LATE COLDSTREAM GUARDS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BELGIC REVOLUTION IN 1830."

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FROM THE FRENCH

OF

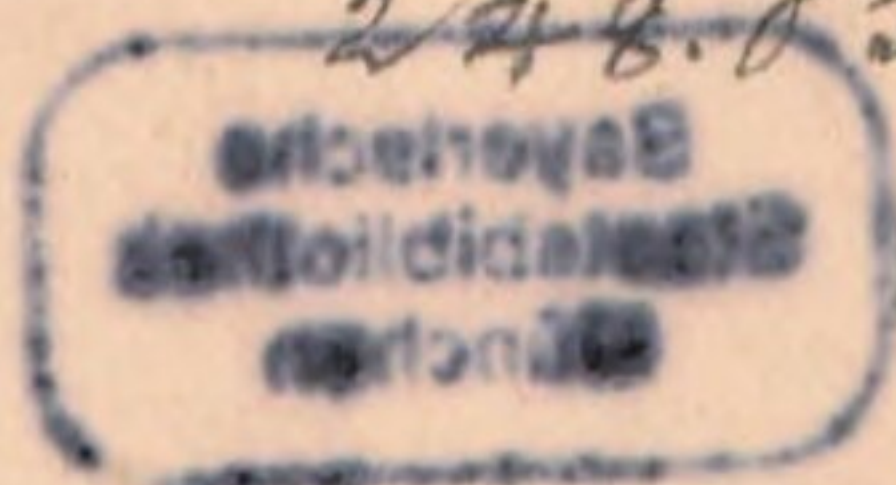
M. B. C. Dumortier,

MEMBER OF THE BELGIC HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

BRUSSELS.

A. CAUVIN, PRINTER.

—
1838.



BELGIUM

AND THE

TWENTY-FOUR ARTICLES:

CHARLES WHITE, ESQ.

LATE CHURCHMAN CLERK

A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AND ITS HISTORY IN 1886

BRUSSELS

A. GABRIEL, PRINTER

1886

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PREFACE

PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR.

HAVING been requested by several members of the Belgic legislature to prepare an English version of the important pamphlet recently published by M. DUMORTIER ¹, entitled, *La Belgique et les 24 Articles*, I consented upon the condition that I should be permitted to introduce such alterations as might appear best adapted to English readers, and consequently best calculated to advance the object of those who are desirous that their cause should meet with impartial consideration and strict justice. By doing this, I have identified myself with the contents, and must assume my full share of the responsibility.

This I do, however, with the greater readiness

¹ One of the Representatives for the town of Tournay, Member of the Royal Academy of Brussels and of other learned Societies.

since M. Dumortier's conclusions as to the policy of placing Belgium in a fitting position to fulfil the objects for which she has been raised into a kingdom fully accord with my own recorded opinions¹.

I endeavoured to the best of my feeble power to demonstrate in that work the necessity of distributing even-handed justice both to Holland and Belgium and of strengthening the latter as far as it was possible, consistently with the rights, interests and security of the former. I strove to prove that if a new barrier was required as a substitute for the old barrier, of which the inefficacy has been proved and admitted, it would be a repetition of an acknowledged error to sow the seeds of disorganisation in the foundations of the new edifice, in the same manner that they were implanted in those of the old structure; a structure, by the bye, admirable in theory and intent, but utopian and almost impracticable as regarded its execution, durability and serviceable qualities². To

¹ By recorded opinions I mean those contained in my *History of the Belgic revolution of 1830*, published by Whitaker in 1835.

² The treaties of London, Vienna and Paris stipulated that the *fusion* of the two countries should be *intimate and complete*. Difference of religion and opinions, hereditary jealousies and rivalries of all sorts which had existed since the days of Philip II., rendered this *fusion* impossible. Impolitic measures widened the breach. The result is known.

persist in such a system would be to commence by vitiating the whole work, and thus to cast Belgium, weak, impoverished, and discontented, into the arms of France.

Yes! to cast her into the arms of that France for whom she is supposed, erroneously supposed, to feel an overweening predilection, an avowed bias—of that France which would not hesitate to dispose of Belgium, if she herself were weak, as readily as she would swallow up Belgium, were she sufficiently powerful to bid defiance to Europe. Here I allude to that latent and one may say hereditary policy which characterised the various epochs of the old régime, the Republic, and the Empire, and not to the overt principles of the present French government and sovereign, which sovereign, for the happiness of Europe and to his own honour, has devoted the whole bent of his endeavour, the whole energy of his powerful mind to calm the effervescence of his people and to neutralize that dangerous maxim so often proclaimed and so strenuously advocated by a large body of Frenchmen,—viz, that the natural boundaries of France are the Rhine on one side, and the North Sea upon the other.

But the present pacific policy of France is tem-

porary and personal, not inherent and national. It is dependent upon the speculative spirit and money-making temperature of a day, wherein the chivalry of the battle-field, the thirst for glory, and the fever for military renown that distinguished former epochs seem to have merged in the more material ambition and craving after wealth which pervades men's minds in France from the highest peer or marshal to the lowest corporal or clerk. The aristocracy of the sword has yielded to that of the purse. Change is the arena on which Frenchmen now struggle for supremacy, and the victors in these combats are looked upon, if not with equal deference, at all events with greater envy than those of Austerlitz and Jena ¹.

This may be a proof of the pacific tendency of public opinion in 1838, but it is no argument in favour of such a spirit being prevalent in 1840. It is consequently no proof of the wisdom of forgetting the past, or of omitting to provide for the future.

The creation of Belgium into a totally independent kingdom is a prospective act, an act intended

¹ The recent debates upon the pensions proposed to be accorded to the widows of General Damremont and the gallant Colonel Combes, are proofs of the present lukewarmness of the French Chambers in regard to subjects which at one time would have been hailed with enthusiasm and voted by acclamation.

to bear good and stable fruit through successive ages. It is an act of compensation intended to remedy an error and to maintain the equilibrium of Europe, and thus to guard against any vicissitudes that might threaten the future safety and existence of neighbouring states. But the pacific tendency of the present epoch in France is not, as I have observed, the result of fixed principles, but that of momentary preoccupation and of a new pursuit which is the more absorbing from its novelty. It therefore becomes the duty of European government, and, above all, of that of England, to guard against a relapse and to be prepared for a revival of that old warlike spirit, that spirit of conquest and encroachment which smoulders, but is not eradicated. Amongst these precautionary measures, none is perhaps more important than the consolidation of Belgium upon such a basis of contented individuality as may induce her to repel, in lieu of inviting, aggression.

Belgium when under the dominion of the house of Austria possessed nearly the same independent privileges and advantages as those accorded to Hanover whilst annexed to the British sceptre. Sometimes also she enjoyed neutrality in her character as a distinct country, but she was much

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more frequently involved in, and was the cause of, the wars that were carried on by the government of which she formed a collateral portion¹; for her geographical position as regarded Austria not only enfeebled, but left her at the mercy of the first aggressor; and thus her territory became the cause of contention and the theatre of combat during a long succession of disastrous years. In the event of an enemy's advance, she was first to suffer; in the event of retreat, she was the last to be relieved.

This was bitterly felt not only by her population, but by the house of Austria itself. Thus, however much the court of Vienna might have valued so rich and fertile a possession, it would have gladly availed itself of the first opportunity to renounce the costly appendage, could it have obtained an equivalent nearer home. This opportunity did not occur until 1814, when the Emperor Francis, well knowing the weakness of these distant dominions and recollecting the rivers of blood and mines of gold that had been expended in their defence, was nowise reluctant to accept an exchange and to renounce his pretensions to them in perpetuity.

What does this prove? Simply, that from the

¹ For instance, in the war of 1733 for the crown of Poland, the Low Countries remained neuter.

nature of circumstances Austria could not lend such immediate and efficient aid to the Belgic provinces as could guarantee them from invasion, and that, although these provinces were intended to serve as a barrier against French encroachment, the Belgic people had not the same direct interest in defending their own territory that they would have had in the event of their interests and nationality being totally distinct from those of Austria. The barrier was in fact so weak, both morally and physically, as to be a detriment rather than a safeguard, a motive for contest rather than a token of harmony. Consequently, a political barrier that has not sufficient force within or without to enable it to stem the first assaults of an enemy, is to all intents and purposes an encumbrance in lieu of an advantage, a reverted sword instead of a buckler.

Such was the situation of Belgium under the house of Austria, to which house the Belgic people were, nevertheless, most warmly attached. Through the territorial arrangements resulting from the treaty of Vienna, the weakness and defect of the barrier were perpetuated in the Netherland's kingdom. Its physical strength was not augmented, whilst its moral power was much diminished ; for

the Belgian people abhorred their Dutch brethren, whilst they had loved and respected their Austrian kinsmen. At length, as all Europe knows, the fabric fell to the ground, partly from ill advised construction and partly from the same evils that had enfeebled it in former times.

This is not a place, however, to discuss the causes that led to the downfall of the barrier, or, in other words, to the rupture between Holland and Belgium. It suffices to say that the barrier has been broken down and replaced by another, and that it is the duty and direct interest of Great Britain to exert every effort to secure the substitute from the enervating vices that led to the dissolution of its predecessor. It suffices to say that the rupture between the two countries has taken place ; that it is an accomplished fact ; that a return to a former state of things is impracticable now or hereafter ; and that the impossibility and impolicy of any such return is acknowledged and consecrated by divers acts of the great Powers, and admitted by the Dutch themselves. If the empire of fact and reason were not sufficient to prove this, there is enough in the present proceedings of the Hague Cabinet to serve as a reply to those who have constantly argued in favour of a restoration and sought to encourage

the King of the Netherlands in resisting the conditions of divorce ; for what more overwhelming reply can be given to such persons than may be found in the successive acts of that monarch and his government. It was the Dutch ministry who first proposed and sanctioned the act of administrative separation , voted by the States General in September, 1830. It was a Note of the same ministers, dated 18th February, 1831, that fully and entirely admitted the principle of Belgic independence and her right to elect an independent sovereign. It is the same ministry that has now come forward and earnestly demanded the rigid execution of that treaty, against which they most solemnly protested during seven years. A treaty which, whether it be executed textually, or whether it be subjected to just modifications, must set the seal to the renunciation of all those principles and pretensions which the cabinet of the Hague in the name of the Dutch nation, has repeatedly declared its determination to defend to the last moment of its existence.

Consequently, unless those who still argue against Belgic independence pretend to be more Dutch than the Dutch themselves, and are better acquainted with the true interests of Holland than the King of that country, they must be constrained

to admit that the independence of Belgium is not only indispensable, but that it is essential to establish that independence upon such an efficient basis as will preclude the possibility of another catastrophe, the pernicious results of which may not be so easily neutralized as those which Europe has so recently escaped, through the discretion of the five Powers assembled in Conference in London, aided, it cannot be denied, by the moderation and prudence of the leading men in Belgium¹.

Let us look for a moment to this question of Belgic independence, both as regards ancient claims, present rights and future consequences. In the controversy now carried on between the advocates on both sides, much stress has been laid upon the question of primitive independence, that is to say, upon the claims put forward by Belgium to independence in former times. M. Dumortier, as will be seen, has dwelt forcibly upon the subject, and has strengthened his argument by a docu-

¹ It will be asked why refuse to give Holland her meed of praise : the reply is peremptory. War has been the constant hope and object of Holland, who has spared no pains to embroil the great Powers and to disturb the generally existing harmony.— This is a fact well known to all diplomatists and, it may be added, to all observing men in Europe.

ment relative to this subject inserted in the notes¹. A document not only extremely singular from the admission it makes that Belgium was entitled to *resume* her independence and that she was her *own liberator* in 1814, but equally remarkable from the source whence it sprung, that is to say from its being signed by the Duke of Saxe-Weimar and the Prussian General Von Bulow.

But what has this to do with the question? If the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles V. (Nov. 1549); if the convention signed 6th May, 1598, by which Philip the Second ceded Belgium to the Infanta Isabella under the title of the circle of Burgundy²; if the subsequent Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VI. of Germany, dated 19th April, 1713, did not consecrate the absolute independence of Belgium, they established its position in regard to Spain and Austria nearly upon the same footing as that of Hanover in regard to Great Britain, and they moreover most distinctly sanctioned the indivisibility of territory and linked the whole of the

¹ See Proclamation of Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar countersigned by General Bulow, page 24.

² The Belgic provinces were formed into the circle of Burgundy and circle of the Empire by the Emperor Maximilian on the 26th June 1548.

provinces, including Limburg and Luxemburg, in one « inseparable » bond ¹.

But supposing this to be no proof of previous independence, surely past thralldom is no excuse or argument for present or future dependence. Was not America dependent until she obtained her freedom through the force of events and the will of her people? Was not Greece enchained until the same causes led to similar results? The one and the other *conquered*, if they have not *reconquered*, their independence, and so has Belgium. What does it matter, then, whether the latter has returned to what she formerly possessed, or whether the acquisition only dates from the day of revolution. The essential point is that she is independent, that she is acknowledged to be independent, that the King of the Netherlands himself is not only eager to proclaim this independence, but his cabinet and his people, forgetful of their own resistance and outcries, are now as ready to spill their blood in enforcing the ratification as they

¹ The difference between Poland and Belgium may be adduced as a proof of the inutility of referring to antecedents. Poland was free for ages : she is not so now. Belgium, according to those who refuse her any title to former liberty, was enthralled ; but she is now free. Poland would doubtless gladly renounce her antecedents if she could obtain the same results as Belgium.

were previously enthusiastic and resolute in averting it.

It is almost a waste of time, therefore, to enter into a discussion relating to antecedents, when the whole pith and urgency of the question is of a prospective character as regards Europe, and more especially Great Britain, who is more interested than almost any other Power in upholding and firmly establishing this independence.

The absolute emancipation of Belgium, as we have said before, is an « accomplished fact. » A fact that can only be revoked through the medium of some general convulsion, and which, if it be revoked, must eventually lead to one of the three following issues : namely, to a resumption of independence, —to the same destiny that befel ancient Poland, —or to an integral annexation to France ; for, it may safely be said that there is henceforth no medium. Belgium must be absolutely independent, or she will return to France. As to a partition, that would ultimately produce the same results, and as to a resuscitation of the Netherlands kingdom, that is not within the circle of probabilities or indeed of possibilities. It is a consummation forbidden by experience and so utterly opposed to all sound policy that even if it were possible for the whole of

the Members of the Congress of Vienna to revise the treaty of 1815, they would most probably condemn the thought of such a resuscitation both for themselves and their heirs for ever.

This being the case, what is the line of conduct that ought to be pursued? There may be many who may deplore the dissolution of the Netherland's kingdom ; but surely it would be a most senseless proof of grief to perpetuate or increase an evil by converting a bad thing into a worse.

If it be the wish of the great Powers to retain a perpetual thorn in their own sides, if they would implant the kernel of never ceasing irritations and outbreakings in a country which it is desirable to calm, in order to secure neutrality ; if they would sow the seeds of discontent and revolt in the hearts of a people more turbulent and more disposed to commotion, from the faults of previous position, combined with those of their successive rulers than from any inherent tendency to rebellion ; if they would enfeeble and disgust this people and render them indifferent to their nationality, and thence dispose them to unite with France ; in short, if they would undo all the labours of the last seven years and lay the foundation for future wars,—let them adhere rigidly to those measures

which Belgium considers unjust and ruinous, let them clip the population and resources of that kingdom, and reduce it to such a state of inanition as will utterly defeat the purposes for which it was erected, — purposes of durability and future security, and not of temporary transition and momentary convenience.

Two Belgioms totally different one from the other may spring from the award : the one wealthy, flourishing, tranquil, proud of its nationality, and so satisfied with its individuality as to abjure all foreign sympathies, and to unite hand in hand against the apostles and promoters of convulsion, no matter whether they come from the North or the South. The other would be an impoverished, disheartened and turbulent Belgium, ashamed of the exiguity of her resources and constantly thirsting after change and amendment ; a Belgium distrustful of itself and rancorous against others, above all against those who burthened her with onerous sacrifices, in order to favour her rival ; a Belgium constantly turning its eyes and ears to France ; and ready not only to promote anarchy in that country, but eager to combine with those whose object might be of a subversive or aggressive nature ; a Belgium, in fine, that would have no scruples to avail itself of the earliest

pretext for flying from those engagements which it would only consider binding from compulsion.

Peace, strength, security and immense reciprocal advantages would accrue to Europe from the one; discord, weakness, perils and perhaps a *quasi* bankruptcy from the other. By bankruptcy I mean a refusal to make good those pecuniary stipulations which Belgium regards as overcharges arising from erroneous calculation, overcharges resulting from incorrect estimates furnished by the Netherland's plenipotentiaries to the Conference, and at total variance with the official returns of the Netherland's Finance department prior to the rupture¹.

A notion is prevalent both in England and Germany that the tendencies of Belgium are essentially and exclusively French; that she entertains no sincere attachment to her own independence; that she would most gladly seize the first favour-

¹ It will be answered that, if you relieve Belgium, you must impose on Holland, who may plead the same excuse for not fulfilling her engagements. But, if she did so, she would be guilty of an act of essentially bad faith, unless indeed she can prove that her calculations are just, and that the relief demanded by Belgium is unwarranted by antecedents; that is to say, that her own estimates are correct and those of Belgium false. It would be against the very essence of the principles constantly supported by all equitable men to sacrifice Holland to Belgium: all that is wanted is justice. But to say to Belgium, « You must pay Dutch debts, because she declines to do so, » would be just as reasonable as to saddle those debts upon Saxony or Bavaria.

able opportunity to throw herself into the arms of France; and that she looks for all commercial and political advantages from that quarter. This notion, however prevalent, is and has been proved to be erroneous in various ways¹.

The sympathies of nations are not like those of private individuals. The one may depend upon magnetic influences and attractions, the other can only be based upon motives of utility, reciprocal concessions and unity of interests as well as opinions; and, with a country so essentially devoted to industry and agriculture, these sympathies must be founded upon mutual benefits and mutual exchanges. The custom house tariff is the barometer of national sympathy in this instance; and one need only consult that tariff or look to the discussions that have taken place in the French and Belgic Chambers to discover that, if ever Belgium did look to any great commercial concessions or advantages to be derived from France, the illusion has been

¹ It is singular enough that at a moment when the Belgians are accused of entertaining an overweening affection for France and of truckling to that country, French politicians and, indeed, Frenchmen of all classes complain of the want of sympathy as well as ingratitude of Belgium. I can take upon myself to affirm that in the French Chambers there is a generally prevalent feeling that Belgium is not so well disposed to France as Frenchmen might desire.

completely dissipated. If France were to reduce her duties and open her markets to Belgic produce, which she neither can nor will consent to, then indeed sympathies would be awakened. But at present these sympathies only exist in the minds of those who are desirous to strengthen their arguments against the independence of Belgium.

The Belgians are a practical and not a visionary people. There exists little romance in their character. What they want from France is material, not theoretical benefits. Consequently, the knowledge that these material benefits cannot be accorded has awakened other sympathies and directed them into a different channel, and that to Great Britain.

Yes! I do not hesitate to affirm that if there is a country to which all patriotic and sensible Belgians turn their eyes for permanent support, it is to England; to England who, though she may, and ought to seek all possible advantages from her alliance with Belgium, cannot entertain the remotest idea of annexing that country to her own dominions; to England who, independent of those general political motives which equally affect the Northern Powers, has an interest more direct and material than any other nation in fostering Belgic independence and in aiding the Belgians, by every

means consistent with equity, to fortify their nationality and to improve their resources.

I have said that England is more directly interested than any other power in consolidating Belgic nationality upon an equitable and solid basis. This important fact, for fact it is, does not seem to be fully understood or appreciated by English politicians.

There is, I am aware, a numerous class of eminent men in Great Britain who deplore the dissolution of the Netherland's kingdom, and look upon it as a measure as much fraught with danger to Europe as it is opposed to British interest. The first of these apprehensions may be well founded; but if it is, the fault will not rest with the Belgians, who are desirous to protect and consolidate their nationality and to *prolong their neutrality*. The fault must be ascribed to those who would fain undermine that nationality at the outset, and thus drive Belgium to throw herself under the feet of that very nation from whom it is desired that she should be totally estranged. The second motive for alarm is, however, completely groundless; for it is an incontestable fact that England has gained, and—unless some extraordinary changes take place in the wants and demands of the Belgic people or in the system of her government—must continue to

gain in a remarkable degree by that very dissolution, which is stigmatized as a misfortune'. Let us have recourse to a few facts to prove the truth of this assertion.

All financial and mercantile men are well aware that the commercial policy of the Netherlands government, from 1815 to the last moment of the union, was characterized by considerable jealousy and even hostility towards the mercantile interests of Great Britain. No efforts were spared to create establishments that might rival those of England, and thus supersede the necessity of receiving divers indispensable articles of merchandise from our manufacturing districts. Heavy protecting duties were imposed upon British manufactures and raw produce, which were thus nearly excluded from the markets of the Netherlands, or could only arrive there under such disadvantages as nearly neutralised all chances of fair profit. Indeed, in order to enhance the obstacles raised

' This is so completely the opinion of the Dutch that it has been constantly asserted in that country and even hinted at by the highest authorities that England encouraged the revolution for selfish motives, and this even during the Duke of Wellington's administration. The real truth was that His Grace, however much he might have deplored the event, wisely resolved not to plunge Great Britain into war, in order to maintain the crown of the Netherlands upon the head of any particular sovereign.

against the introduction and use of English stuffs, a Society of Commerce, with an immense capital, was formed with the double view of purchasing native manufactures from the loom and of exporting or disposing of them at home, without risk or expense to the producer¹, and this at a price as moderate if not more moderate than the market value of English goods.

British coals, iron, calicoes, cutlery, hardwares and stuffs, especially those mostly required for the consumption of the middling and lower classes, that is, for the great mass of the population, were almost prohibited; the whole of the articles being supplied to Holland by her Belgic brethren. Colonial produce suffered the same fate; for the preference was of course given to Dutch coffees, sugars and spices. Thus, whilst the northern provinces drew almost every article of first utility and necessity from the southern provinces, the latter drew all her colonial supplies from the North; and thus the resources of the two portions of the kingdom

¹ This was carried so far that it frequently occurred that the Society bought at the manufacturing *Netherlands* price and sold at a less, in order to undersell the *Glasgow* or *Manchester* dealers, whose producing price was lower than that of Ghent, etc.,—a system beneficial to individual manufacturers, but far from advantageous to the community.

sufficed for their mutual supply, and rendered them in a great measure independent of Great Britain,—a state of affairs highly advantageous to the Netherlands government, but no way beneficial to the interest of Great Britain.

Such was the state of the case prior to the separation. Now, let us see what has been the result of this event, and what must be the consequence of establishing Belgic independence upon a durable and flourishing basis? Why, one of the immediate consequences—consequences that have and must be prolonged and improved, if judiciously handled—was that Holland, not being a manufacturing country, and neither possessing mines nor collieries, was compelled to open her ports to English coals, iron and stuffs. She was compelled to draw from Newcastle and Sunderland, from Glasgow and Manchester, what she had hitherto received from Liège, Mons and Ghent. She was moreover under the necessity of modifying her tariff, as regarded the admission of all those articles of British produce and manufacture that were essential for home consumption and the supply of her colonies. In short, Great Britain forthwith felt the effects of the change, and almost exclusively reaped all the advantages. This may excite jealousy in other

nations, but it surely cannot be a cause of regret to Englishmen.

On the other hand, Belgium, not being a commercial or maritime country, in an extended or comparative sense, and not possessing any colonies, was constrained to have recourse to England for a portion of those articles of colonial produce which form so large an item of her consumption, and which she had hitherto exclusively derived from Holland¹. But, more than this, the Ghent cotton-spinners and manufacturers being unsupported by the Society of Commerce and being deprived of the annual aid of the fund called *The Million of Industry*², they were no longer able to compete with Manchester and Glasgow; and thus our manufacturing districts obtained the command of the market.

Here again Great Britain immediately reaped the most unquestionable advantages and was enabled to augment her exports to a much greater amount than is perhaps generally known. This may be a very grievous result to Holland, but Englishmen

¹ It is not intended to say that England possesses any thing in the shape of monopoly, but that the market is open to her upon the same conditions as all other states.

² This million was voted annually, and was devoted to the establishment of new manufactories or of the support of the old. Its policy as a national measure has been much questioned. It was, to use a trite expression, « robbing Peter to pay Paul ».

have certainly no cause for joining in the lament, unless the latter consider it a misfortune that Great Britain should now supply the two countries with the goods which they formerly received from each other¹.

If then the separation between the two countries is shown to be beneficial to England, it stands to reason that England ought to exert every just effort not only to secure a duration of the separation, but to improve the resources and augment the demands of the divorced parties. The utility of Belgium and Holland as allies is incontestable ; but more especially that one which has the greater necessity for our manufactures and produce, should not be sacrificed to the other. The existence of Belgium as an independent nation is of vital importance to Great Britain : it behoves her, if possible, therefore, to place the nationality of such an ally beyond the action of vicissitudes and to multiply her resources to the utmost extent that equity will permit ; for it requires little argument to prove that a diminution of Belgic population,

¹ Holland still continues to supply a considerable portion of colonial produce to Belgium ; but, if she does, she must come into the market upon the same conditions as other foreigners. If she can then undersell England—the Belgians would be very unwise not to become her customers.

confidence, credit, and wealth would be a direct abridgment of English revenue and English mercantile profits.

To prove this, let the reader refer to the following comparative Table of exports and imports between England and France and between the former and Belgium during an average of six years since the dissolution of the Netherland's kingdom. Now, the first thing that will strike the eye is the remarkable fact that Belgium, with a population of only four millions, has *consumed*, during these six years, a mass of British goods *double* in registered amount to that consumed by 36 millions of Frenchmen, and this, notwithstanding the difficulties and embarrassments of her position and all the disadvantages incidental to political uncertainty. This fact, founded on correct data, is worthy of consideration ; for it is a triumphant answer to those who condemn the efforts that have been made to establish Belgic independence. The wealth of governments does not rest upon theoretical calculation, but upon practical results. The prosperity of a manufacturing people is not dependent upon political sympathies, but upon the amount of its exports. Look then to the following summary, and say whether England is entitled to be satisfied, and above all to exert

COMMERCE OF ENGLAND
WITH
FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

Years	GENERAL COMMERCE, INCLUDING TRANSIT.				SPECIAL COMMERCE CONSUMPTION.			
	VALUE OF MERCHANDISE IMPORTED BY ENGLAND		VALUE OF MERCHANDISE EXPORTED BY ENGLAND		VALUE OF MERCHANDISE IMPORTED BY ENGLAND		VALUE OF MERCHANDISE EXPORTED BY ENGLAND.	
	FROM		TO		FROM		TO	
	BELGIUM.	FRANCE.	BELGIUM.	FRANCE.	BELGIUM.	FRANCE.	BELGIUM.	FRANCE.
1831	13,587,948	114,387,349	38,755,616	20,220,398	13,218,577	67,319,132	36,481,901	12,167,694
1832	9,142,914	101,737,420	82,227,554	43,952,925	7,954,348	67,430,482	79,907,620	27,726,982
1833	10,682,497	116,195,858	66,096,928	39,741,659	10,353,872	67,913,132	63,387,799	22,417,151
1834	8,099,713	93,766,289	52,566,228	53,488,305	7,911,187	62,431,586	48,979,661	27,095,066
1835	12,742,329	99,570,826	53,791,368	61,288,292	11,008,528	59,688,163	44,537,148	31,658,956
1836	17,731,979	115,249,476	52,616,410	68,134,177	16,118,189	66,050,699	50,111,566	35,304,428
Total	71,987,380	640,907,218	346,054,104	286,823,756	66,562,701	390,833,194	323,405,695	156,380,277

every effort to improve so profitable an alliance.

In the first place, it appears as already stated that during the six years commencing with 1830, and ending in 1836, England has exported to Belgium, for *actual consumption*, merchandise to the value of fr. 323,405,695

Whereas her exports to France for the same object and space of time do not exceed. 156,380,277

The difference in favour of Belgium amounts therefore to fr. 167,025,418

Thus showing that Belgium has consumed more than double the whole amount consumed by France. Consequently, the manufacturers of Great Britain have derived advantages to the amount of more than 6 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ millions st. more by their traffic with the one than with the other, a surplus of considerable importance when it is considered that the whole amount of exports to France falls short of the difference.

Secondly, it will be seen on referring to the Table that whilst France only imported from Great Britain goods to the value of fr. 156,380,277 She exported to England to the amount of 390,833,194

Thus leaving a balance against the latter of 234,452,917

Here then we find that Great Britain has imported nearly 9 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ millions more than she exported to France, and thence, that she has paid to that country a tantamount sum in hard money. The result is, however, widely different if we turn to the column of exchanges with Belgium. There all the advantage is upon the side of England ; for it appears that whilst she has exported goods to the former to the amount of . fr. 323,405,695

She has only imported . . . 66,562,701

Thus giving a balance in her

favour of fr. 256,842,994

Here then we have England losing, by her commercial intercourse with France, an annual sum of nearly 1 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ millions sterling ; whereas by her commerce with Belgium she derives an annual gain exceeding that amount, and thus also, by a singular coincidence, Belgium makes good to England the difference paid to France and enables her to square her balance-sheet of exports and imports ; that is to say, as far as regards the annexed Table. If this be not an advantage, a precious advantage worth cultivating and improving, then profit and loss must change significations, and there is no longer any truth in the old certainty of two and two making four.

The general principle of policy as regards the conduct of England to Belgium may admit of controversy ; but when such facts stare us in the face it is impossible not to acknowledge that the advantages resulting to Great Britain from Belgic independence are such as to render it almost a matter of duty for every Englishman to support nationality of that country and to desire that this nationality should be attended by the utmost development of wealth and prosperity. Weaken Belgium, diminish her resources and curtail her population, and the natural result will be a corresponding loss to England,—a proportionate diminution of her exports. If England sacrifice Belgium to Holland, she will sacrifice her own direct interest and in lieu of fostering those growing sympathies which are the result of necessity, and improving the advantages she derives from the sympathies, she will drive the Belgians to seek for other intimate alliances, and thus to divert those sources of profit into other channels'.

This part of the question may be considered as intimately connected and correlative with that of the financial burdens intended to be imposed

¹ No allusion has been made to the profit England derives from the transit and smuggling trade. The latter is immense.

upon Belgium by the 24 Articles ; for, if a large sum be annually drawn from the pockets of the people not for purposes of home expenditure, by the sources whence it was taken, but to be paid over to Holland, and thus expended out of the territory, it stands to reason that the demand for divers articles of native and foreign produce must be proportionately reduced, and that the sum which the people would have spent in the purchase of these articles must be lost to trade. Consequently, the more Belgium be saddled with debt and taxation, — the more her people have to pay to Holland, — the less will they have to spend at home, and the less will be the demand for English manufacturer or colonial produce.

I have said enough, however, to show that Great Britain is deeply interested in the equitable arrangements of this important question ; I will therefore merely add that the principal points treated in the following pages are, —

1st. The validity of the treaty of the 24 Articles, which the Belgians consider as a unilateral act that has lost its binding character through the refusal of Holland to adhere to its provisions and the reluctance of the great Powers to see them carried into effect.

2dly. The date of execution, that is to say the period at which the Conference most undoubtedly *intended* that the treaty must have force, although which it would eventually find its way back to such date is not distinctly defined in any of their public acts¹.

3dly. The errors that have crept into the financial calculations of the Conference, which founded its award upon erroneous estimates, and thence according to its own solemn declaration is at liberty to cancel the results of the calculations and to revise its labours.

4thly. The territorial question as relates both to the connection of Limburg and Luxemburg with Belgium since the days of Charles V. and the consequent hardship and impolicy of depriving Belgium of a population, hitherto considered as

¹ If evidence of the intentions of the Conference was not to be met with on the face of the protocols, it is opposed to common reason to suppose that the great Powers ratified the treaty for undefined purposes. The object of the Conference was an *immediate solution* and what was understood, though not expressed, but *immediate execution*. Indeed, if any doubt upon this head did exist, it is cleared up by the following extract from that Protocol wherein the Conference says that not being able to abandon questions of which the *immediate solution* has become a European necessity, the undersigned, etc. It is ridiculous therefore to pretend, as it is pretended by the Dutch, that *immediate* means *indefinite* and that *solution* means permission to *procrastinate* and *prolong* the state of uncertainty.

forming an inseparable portion of her territory.

These points and others connected with them, especially those relating to the debt, have been argued so forcibly by M. Dumortier that nothing more remains to be said, save to express a hope that not only the British Government, but the British Senate will not lightly abandon the cause of a people whom it is their interest to support and establish upon such a basis of contentment and solidity as shall render their alliance a matter of direct advantage *to England and of general utility to the rest of Europe.*

CHARLES WHITE.

Brussels, 1st July, 1838.

There is no one more firmly convinced than ourselves that all ratified treaties should be considered as inviolable and that the faithful performance of international engagements is the first duty of all civilized people. But, whilst we start by upholding this sacred principle, we venture to affirm that no treaty can be considered as definitive or obligatory unless it be synallagmatic and bilateral, that is to say, mutually ratified and adhered to, and thence binding upon all the contracting parties; no matter whether they be states of the first or second order, or whether they be direct or collateral subscribers. Consequently, if one party thinks proper to refuse its adhesion, or if another renounces its engagements, it thereby releases the adverse party from all obligations, and the whole treaty falls to the ground. Any nation attempting to disavow this principle of public law

must diminish its credit in the eyes of all other Powers and assume a position contrary to the organic and avowed law that regulates the great social pact. Such, however, has been the position assumed by the Netherland's cabinet in regard to the 24 Articles.

It is not our object to draw comparisons, in order to strengthen our arguments; but, it must be admitted by all impartial persons, indeed by all those who have watched the question at issue between the courts of Brussels and the Hague, that the former displayed the utmost probity and good faith in all its diplomatic and political relations during the years 1831 and 1832, and that it no sooner subscribed to the treaty of November, than it frankly adhered to its stipulations and evinced no desire to shrink from their accomplishment, and that in despite of the most onerous sacrifices. Therefore, if this accomplishment was not brought to an issue; if the treaty of November remained, as it were, a dead letter, the fault cannot be imputed to Belgium, but to the Netherland's cabinet and the Conference; for, whilst the first unhesitatingly complied, the second protested *in toto*, and the last declined to enforce the execution of its own conditions.

It is no easy matter, therefore, to discover the principle of equity or precedent on which is founded the expectation that Belgium shall strictly adhere to a treaty, in 1838, which was

disavowed and rejected in 1831 and 1832 by those whose interest it was intended to promote.

The general aspect of European affairs, as well as the moral and physical position of Belgium, have materially changed since 1831. The time is now past when the great Powers, alone intent upon restoring tranquillity and maintaining general peace, determined to dispose of Belgium, not absolutely without her consent, but, at all events, in a manner essentially opposed to the interests and wishes of the vast majority of the nation. At the present hour Belgium has reassumed the position which was her birthright. She possesses that independence which is the inherent right of all European nations. Her resources are immense, her credit is upon a level with that of many of the most ancient and flourishing kingdoms. Her monarch, who has been acknowledged by and is in alliance with almost every foreign Power, has strengthened the natural force of his position by family connections, and has thus added an additional bond of vigour and consolidation to the external relations of his government.

The Belgian army, at all times brave but not invariably fortunate; and let us ask, is France, England, Austria, or Russia, without a blot upon her military escutcheon. The Belgian army, we repeat, is now well disciplined and equipped¹, and

¹ The numerical strength of the Belgic troops now actually under

is commanded in person by a royal chief who has given proofs of his military capacity on more than one hard fought field. Its *materiel* and numerical strength exceeds that of Holland ; and the latter may be considered as doubly available, in case of emergency, from the facility afforded by the railways of transporting any number of troops from one end of the frontier to another in less time than was formerly required to accomplish a single march. Thence augmenting the means of defence, or, if necessary, of sudden attack at any given point. We are justified therefore in affirming that the position of Belgium is totally changed, and we might say reversed as regards Holland ; for, if the apparent tendency of the treaty, in 1831, was to consolidate the former, it is evident that the object of enforcing the pure and simple execution of that treaty, in 1838, would be to consolidate and benefit Holland to the detriment of her rival.

The paramount question that presents itself at the present moment for examination is, whether the treaty of November, 1831 is to be considered as an accomplished and irrevocable fact, or, in other words, whether Belgium is to be held responsible for and to be bound by its stipulations, in the same manner that she would have been bound, had the Netherland's government per-

arms amounts to 75,000 men. The war contingent liable to be called out in case of emergency amounts to 119,000 men of all arms.

formed its portion of the contract, within any moderate period, and especially within the period anticipated by the Conference; for it cannot be too strongly impressed upon the mind of the reader, that Holland not only refused to adhere to the November treaty at the outset¹, but that she has formally protested against its whole tenor and bearing down to a very recent period. Consequently, we are again at a loss to comprehend the principles of equity upon which the Netherland's government can now come forward and claim the textual execution of a treaty which it has systematically and strenuously rejected during a period of more than seven years: thereby declaring just that which it has invariably stigmatized as unjust; thereby pronouncing as alienable those rights which it declared as inseparable portions of its existence; and thereby proving that the objections it raised against the treaty were less justifiable than it has hitherto chosen to admit.

The argument that we have adduced, in order to show how far Belgium is entitled to consider herself as emancipated from her principal obligations towards Holland, through the very acts of the Netherland's cabinet, might perhaps be em-

¹ « The undersigned have received orders to protest in the most formal manner, as they do hereby protest, against the said treaty ». Note of the Netherland's P. P. to the Conference, 15 December, 1831.

ployed against her as regards her engagements with the five great Powers, whose signatures are attached to the November treaty. But it will surely be admitted that there exists a wide distinction between the compulsory obligations of international and those of private contracts, as affects collateral parties. Whatever may be the cause, object, or result of any private contract, or whatever may be the eventual position of the subscribers, direct or indirect, nothing can or ought to prevent its faithful execution; whereas international contracts have never been considered as irrevocably binding, when the causes that produced them have been modified, and, above all, when the fulfilment of their stipulations has been prostrated and delayed by the wilful nonadhesion of one of the principal parties concerned therein. Indeed, one may vainly search the records of diplomacy or ransack the history of treaties and conventions to discover precedents for a treaty being set down as full and complete, when it was in fact merely unilateral.

Three conclusions result from a close examination of the November treaty which cannot be easily disproved; for we may venture to affirm:

1. That this treaty was drawn up and ratified under the influence and during the existence of a general state of things widely differing from those universally prevailing at this moment; a state of things that urged the great Powers to exact and

Belgium to consent to conditions that are incompatible with the interests of that country, and uncalled for by those of any other.

2. It is beyond a doubt that the pure and simple execution of this treaty would now be impossible, without replunging Belgium into a state of confusion and general discontent as essentially opposed to the pacific views and equitable intentions of the great Powers as it would be pregnant with mischief not only to Belgium, but to the ultimate repose of neighbouring states.

3. It is no less evident that the treaty contains a date, that is, a limited date of proposed execution, perfectly accordant with the compulsory nature of those pressing circumstances that dictated its provisions, but which is utterly at variance with the improved aspect of Belgium and Europe.

In October, 1831, the internal condition or general physiognomy of the world totally differed from what it is at the present period. France menaced with anarchy and torn by internal factions was then without strength at home or due influence abroad; for the prudent and pacific principles that have formed the basis of Louis Philip's policy had not then developed themselves, or placed him in that high position of confidence and esteem which His Majesty has since attained even with the most despotic and antisympathetic courts. Poland had just fallen in that fearful struggle which she maintained with so much fruitless valour. Belgium

suddenly attacked, in violation of an armistice solicited by Holland and guaranteed by the great Powers, was surprised in a condition utterly unfit for resistance, and was consequently compelled to have recourse to French intervention¹. The British government, intent upon passing the Reform Bill and mainly absorbed by the contest then going on between the two great parties that were bitterly struggling for supremacy, was anxious to rid itself, almost at any price, of all foreign questions, in order that it might devote its whole energies and attention to internal affairs. In the North, the reaction and animosity against the principles that produced the great events of 1830 had reached their zenith. So that, amidst all these conflicting elements and unfavourable concomitants, the interest, one may almost say the rights, of Belgium were less strictly attended to than might have been the case under more favourable auspices. Nor could Belgium expect a different issue; that is to say, at the period in question.

Nevertheless the necessity of rebalancing the equilibrium of Europe forcibly dictated the policy of establishing Belgic independence. The barrier formed by the Netherland's kingdom had been borne down by the torrent of events. It was essential to create another in its place. The November treaty was

¹ For a detailed account of these events see White's History of the Belgic Revolution, vol. II, p. 291.

consequently elaborated, and, when completed, offered sundry rights and privileges of great apparent benefit to Belgium. But, upon a closer examination and prospective view of these beneficial clauses, they will be found more advantageous to the collateral contracting Powers than to Belgium herself; especially, when the nature of the sacrifices imposed upon the latter are duly considered. Such, for example, are the stipulations (Art. 9) relating to the navigation of the intermediary waters between the Scheldt and the Rhine. The necessity or even utility of which will be nearly superseded by the approaching termination of the railway from Antwerp to Cologne. Such, for instance, is the 8th Article, relating to the drainage of the superabundant waters of the Flemish rivers and canals, which will be rendered superfluous by the excavation of the Zelzaete canal intended to run along the frontier of Dutch Zeland and to connect the Scheldt with the North Sea near Ecluse. Such also are the 9th and 10th Articles, which accord to Belgium the right of establishing a railway or canal across that part of Limburg ceded to Holland, upon the right bank of the Meuse, the necessity for which is utterly set aside by the railway now in progress from Liège through the valley of the Vesdre to the Prussian frontier.

The same objections may be made to the 5th clause of the 13th Article, relating to the Sinking Fund Syndicate (*amortisatie syndikaat*), of the Ne-

therland's kingdom¹. By this Article, it was stipulated that commissioners chosen by both the principal parties should meet, at the expiration of fifteen days after the signature of this treaty, in order to liquidate the accounts of the Syndicate, and that Belgium should be credited with the amount of half the assets². Now, at the period when these stipulations were drawn up, there existed a considerable balance in the coffers of the Syndicate, the half of which balance could, of course, have been carried to the credit of Belgium, in part deduction of her portion of the debt. But, since the period in question the whole of this balance has been converted to its own use by the Netherland's government, in order to support its extraordinary war expenditure³. Consequently, this stipulation, or rather the advantageous object of this stipulation, is rendered utterly illusory as regards Belgium, who can have no hope of ever receiving a single florin from a fund of which the balance has been applied to other purposes. Thus, the position of Belgium in 1838 is not only rendered infinitely worse than it was in 1831, as regards this point, but the object of the Conference in introducing

¹ For a description of this mysterious and complicated institution we refer the reader to White's *Belgic Revolution*. I vol., p. 59. *Editor*.

² This stipulation does not appear in the body of the treaty, but is contained in the protocol and annexes attached to it.

³ It is affirmed that the Syndicate has contributed a sum of a hundred millions francs since 1830 to the expenses of the Government.

the clause itself is thereby entirely defeated. But this is not the only evil; for the same fate awaits the liquidation of the funds called *Domein-los-renten* (domain bonds)¹; these funds having been for the most part applied to other purposes by the Netherland's government.

It requires no great developement of language, therefore, to show that these stipulations were enacted under different influences and during a state of affairs totally opposed to those now in existence. But that which more clearly shows the impracticability of executing the treaty purely and simply is a reference to the 13th and 14th Articles, which fix the date of payment due by Belgium to the commencement of 1831. Indeed, the Conference itself entirely annuls the stipulation regarding the reimbursement of arrears by declaring in its protocol of the 11th June, N° 65, that *Belgium was fully justified in refusing to pay these arrears*, seeing that she was compelled to employ *the amount in the legitimate defence of her territory*². This is a most important admission; since the necessity of defence has continued equally urgent down to the latest moment, and nothing whatever has recurred that can tend to modify the equitable principle thus established by the Conference.

¹ The *Domein-los-renten* was a fund arising from loans raised by mortgaging the national domains.

² Papers relative to Belgic affairs. Lett. A. P. 213.

The foregoing simple statement suffices in our opinion to show that it would be a violation of all reason, a violation of the equitable views of the great Powers, and an act of no ordinary injustice to Belgium, to compel her to « *insert the 24 Articles word for word in the direct treaty to be concluded between Belgium and Holland,* » according to the declaration of the Conference, dated 15th October, 1831. It would not only be an act of injustice, but nearly an impossibility.

Let us now refer to the date of the anticipated execution of the treaty of 1831, and we shall there find a further argument against its compulsory execution in 1838. We say *anticipated* execution; for no doubt can exist that the execution was anticipated within a limited period. To argue the reverse, as has been argued by the opponents of Belgium, is to accuse the Conference of having wilfully wasted much valuable time and of having practised an intentional mystification both on Belgium and Europe.

It will be remembered that the 24 Articles, after mature deliberation and the most laborious examination of the various intricate questions involved in and connected with them, were finally terminated upon the 15th October, 1831, and that they were converted into a definite treaty one month later.

Now, according to the 13th Article, the execution of this treaty, as regards the obligations of

Belgium, was declared to take effect from the 1st of January, 1832, and the 14th Article sanctions this assumption in a manner equally decided ; for it results from the context that all disbursements made by Holland, prior to the 1st of January, 1832, are to be considered as merely anticipatory of prompt execution : so much so, indeed, that all sums expended by the Dutch government from the 1st November, 1830, are designated as « advances, » and the period of reimbursement fixed for the 1st January, 1832 ; that is to say, for the day upon which it was formally intended that the treaty should bear full force and effect.

Besides, according to the third additional article of the treaty, the ratifications were to be exchanged within six weeks « or in less time if possible. » Consequently, if an unlimited in lieu of a limited period for execution was projected, there could have been no motive for the Conference to hasten the period of ratification, so as merely to afford time for the conveyance of the documents to and from St. Petersburg.

It cannot be asserted, then, that the date of anticipated execution was not clearly defined. Equally certain is it also that it was this defined date, combined with the guarantees given by the great Powers, which alone induced Belgium to submit to the sacrifices imposed upon her and to give her adhesion to the treaty such as it was first presented ; for it is an indisputable fact that she only subscribed to

the onerous conditions imposed upon her upon a distinct understanding and conviction that the state of war in which she had been held should cease forthwith¹. Had it been imagined that interminable delays would have occurred, that heavy and immeasurable expenses would have been entailed almost indefinitely upon the nation, or that one party was to be irrevocably fettered and the other left in complete freedom; had this or any portion of this issue been anticipated, we may venture to affirm, that neither persuasions nor menaces would have induced the Belgic government to enter into any collateral engagement with the great Powers.

Is it reasonable to suppose that Belgium would have bound herself down within a given sphere of action from which there was no possibility of escape or amendment, whilst she left Holland at liberty to act as she pleased, and thus to avail herself of any political incident, convulsion or mutation that might prove advantageous to her own interests? Is it reasonable to suppose that King Leopold, who

¹ See Note of the Belgic plenipotentiary dated 29th June, 1832. The Note of the 9th August, 1832, relating to the guarantees given by the great Powers in regard to the execution of the treaty is no less explicit, and distinctly shows the sense and feeling of the Belgic government. « It required, » says the Note, « nothing less than these positive assurances, these solemn engagements, to induce the King of the Belgians, in lieu of availing himself of the preliminary articles of peace (18 Articles), dated 26th June, 1831, to demand of the political bodies with whom he participates in the exercise of his legislative power the authorisation to subscribe to the 24 articles. »

had refused the crown of Greece, because he would not consent to the dismemberment of the Grecian territory, and who only accepted the Belgic throne under the most formal guarantees and assurances from all the great Powers, and by none more formally and urgently than by the Russian plenipotentiary¹, that the 18 Articles should receive execution.

Having been deceived in regard to this point, is it to be imagined that King Leopold would have given his adhesion to the subsequent treaty had he not felt confident that the great Powers would have placed him in immediate possession of all those advantages which were to counterbalance in some measure the sacrifices imposed upon his people. King Leopold's acceptance of the November treaty was the sole result of his reliance upon the speedy termination of those fatal circumstances which then undermined the best interests of the Belgic people. But no sooner had His Majesty sacrificed himself to the desire of maintaining European peace,—and he did maintain peace by the sacrifice,—no sooner had he placed his foot upon the Belgic

¹ « Will the great Powers immediately recognise me? » exclaimed Prince Leopold unto the pressing solicitations of the plenipotentiaries assembled at Marlborough House on the 12th July, 1831. Will they recognise me if I proceed to Belgium without waiting for the adhesion of the king of Holland. » « In despite of all (*quand même*), replied Count Matuzewiz, and, in the event of his refusing, we will discover means to compel him!! » *White's Belgic Revolution* II vol. p. 334.

soil, than he was called upon to draw the sword and expose his life upon the field of battle in order to defend that throne the tranquil possession of which had been so formally, so unequivocally guaranteed to him¹.

In fact, His Majesty had no sooner submitted to the conditions imposed upon him by the treaty than one of the monarchs whose plenipotentiary had been most eager to urge him forward (*quand même*), refused his unreserved ratification, and in lieu of the Conference taking precautionary measures to stretch the ægis of protection over her new creation, she abandoned it to the unequal chances of war and the penalties of invasion, the fatal effects of which were only averted by the promptitude and decision of the French monarch.

Upon examining the spirit and even the letter of the treaty and accompanying notes and protocols, it is evident that there was a predetermined epoch for the fulfilment of their different engagements, both as regards Belgium and the five Powers, and if this fulfilment was not effected, the fault in nowise rested with the former. But, independent of this stipulated epoch, it is notorious

¹ « The hopes that we derive (for the maintenance of peace) from the dispositions of His Netherlands Majesty are the more accordant with those of the five Powers, as, being guarantees of the suspension of arms concluded in November (1831), the five courts are bound by solemn engagements which subsist in all their force to prevent a renewal of hostilities. » — *Note of Conference in reply to Dutch manifest, 25th July 1831.*

that the great Powers entered into a formal engagement to enforce the immediate execution of the treaty, as results not only from the context of the treaty itself, but from two Notes of the Conference annexed to the 24 Articles, wherein the Powers unequivocally declare that « *they take upon themselves, and by common accord, to obtain the full and entire adhesion of the adverse party to the 24 Articles in the event of its rejecting them.* »

The adverse party in this instance was Holland; the consenting party Belgium. These formal engagements must therefore be considered as correlative and inseparable from those of Belgium, and as having reference to the date of anticipated execution, and not as a precarious and problematical result, but as a fixed and definite event; for, if the date of execution was unlimited, the duration of the Conference must have been considered equally indefinite, and it is evident that the Conference assembled not to propose a problem, but to establish a fact.

Treaties, no matter who may be the negotiating parties or what their relative position, are to all intents and purposes bilateral compacts intended to bind all the subscribing parties; so that, in the event of the non-adhesion of one party, the whole treaty must fall to the ground, and become null and void. An imperfect treaty is no treaty. This axiom may not be strictly applicable when the direct parties are numerous, for the refusal of one may vitiate

a part without destroying the whole : but when these parties are limited to two, it is against all reason, logic and precedent to insist that the signature of one shall be equally as valid as that of both. Again we assert that a treaty drawn up by a collateral party and subscribed to by a second is not a treaty unless adhered to by the adverse side.

Thus much for the principals. Now, as regards collaterals, it is an undoubted fact that the Belgians eager to fulfil their engagements and to exonerate themselves not only from any imputation of bad faith, but from the heavy burdens imposed upon them by a state of war, earnestly solicited the great Powers to look to the immediate execution of the treaty of 1831. This request was, however refused by the latter; and the Conference dissolved without accomplishing the engagements promised by that treaty and formally guaranteed by the Notes already quoted.

From this time, therefore, the treaty may fairly be said to have lost its compulsory character not from the obstinacy of the Belgians, but through the inflexible obstinacy of Holland and the disinclination of the great Powers to enforce their engagements; for had the great Powers been seriously, at all events simultaneously disposed to execute the treaty, and thus put an end to all further contest or discussion, it is evident that they possessed the power. The non execution of the

treaty must therefore be regarded as their act; and the more so, since it results from their former declaration that they were at one time « fully and unanimously » resolved to obtain the consent of the adverse party *nolens volens*. How then can Belgium be bound by a treaty which Holland has systematically rejected, and which the great Powers have tacitly admitted to be no longer binding on themselves? For we repeat that the dissolution of the Conference without coming to a final settlement and without performing their own engagements, ought to be considered as a virtual acknowledgment that they regarded the execution of the treaty as impracticable or that they considered their engagements as no longer imperative upon themselves.

It is an admitted and incontestable fact founded on reason and precedent that treaties cannot be looked upon as accomplished facts until they are reciprocally ratified and have been put into execution. To draw up a definite treaty for a specific purpose and to postpone its execution *sine die* would be a political anachronism, a contradiction at variance with common sense. Consequently as the execution of the November treaty remained in abeyance during seven years through the resistance of Holland and the dissolution of the Conference, it may be affirmed that its obligations ceased to be binding upon Belgium when they lost their obligatory influence over the five Powers and that, if

the latter ceased to hold themselves bound towards Belgium, the Belgians are indisputably released from their engagements toward the Conference or collateral party.

It will be objected that France and Great Britain did commence executing the November treaty as proved by the blockade and siege of Antwerp. But was that execution brought to complete maturity? No, and in this negative consists the whole pith of the question; for the guarantees so solemnly offered by the five Powers were not limited to a part or to the mere assurance of a *commencement*, but were extended to the integral and unreserved execution of the whole. Thus although the French and British governments have manifested every disposition to compel the Netherland's cabinet to accept the 24 Articles, they eventually drew back before the unflinching opposition of the Dutch monarch and the non cooperation of the other great Powers.

It was this concession that led to the convention of the 21st of May 1833, which convention may be considered as individually connected with France, England and Holland. As to Belgium, she remained a total stranger to this compact, having neither been called upon to discuss nor to give her adhesion to its provisions, for the French and English cabinets, in communicating this act to the Belgic plenipotentiary by a Note dated 1st of June, 1833, limited themselves to morely engaging the Belgic

government not to recommence hostilities against Holland, which engagement was entered into by Belgium, but not without considerable demur¹.

It may be fairly argued, therefore, that the commencement of execution undertaken by France and England in 1832, as well as the subsequent convention of the 21st of May, in lieu of furnishing a proof of the accomplishment of the engagements entered into by the Conference, are indications of the difficulty, if not, impossibility the of completely executing these engagements. If then they were impracticable for the collateral Powers, why are they to be held obligatory upon the only remaining subscriber?

What, however, more fully proves the treaty of 1831 to be divested of its irrevocable and compulsory character are the projects technically called themes, put forward in 1832 and 1833, for the purpose not only of modifying and remodelling the old treaty, but of introducing a new one, and this without consulting Belgium²; for it must be borne in mind that the convention of the 21st of May, accepted by Holland, makes no allusion to the old treaty, but to a treaty « to be concluded (*à intervenir*) hereafter. » Now, if the treaty of 1831 had still retained all its primitive force and

¹ Papers relative to Belgium.

² See communication of French and British plenipotentiaries to the Belgic envoy, 1st June, 1833.

compulsory character over all the contracting parties, how could France and England, who had adhered to it simply and purely, deviate from its clauses and propose the negotiation of another? Can it be denied that this is novation and innovation; and, if this be accorded, is it not fair that Belgium should be absolved from all those anterior stipulations by which she had considered herself bound up to a certain period.

It is the fault of the Netherland's cabinet if it let slip the proper moment for negotiating at the expense of Belgium. It would have been more fortunate for that cabinet and more politic also, had it listened to the prophetic words of Count Orloff, who, after exhausting every possible argument and mode of persuasion, terminated his mission by the following declaration, addressed to the Netherland's Foreign Minister, upon the 22 March, 1832, and adhered to upon the same day by the envoys of Austria and Prussia resident at the Hague.

« His Imperial Majesty, said the Count Orloff, cannot avoid declaring, we state it with profound regret that the Netherland's cabinet has for ever (*sans retour*) lost the best opportunity of terminating the Belgic question in a manner conformable to its new interests, and that its allies—Russia above all—must abandon all hope of being of any further utility. »

Considering, as we do, that Belgium is no longer bound to execute the November treaty purely

and simply, we will now endeavour to point out various acts of injustice established by that treaty, and to demonstrate not only that her true interests were not strictly attended to, but that the execution of the treaty such as it exists at present is pregnant with mischief to other states. The following details will explain what may be regarded as the rights of Belgium, which ought to be taken into earnest consideration in the event of the negotiations being renewed.

After the fall of the French empire in 1814, both Belgium and Holland recovered their independence nearly at the same period and through the same medium ; for the imperial armies having been driven back within the limits of old France, both these countries, equally eager to shake off a despotic yoke, were abandoned to themselves and the allied armies¹. The latter occupied the country, it is true, not for the purposes of conquest, but for those of aiding the Belgians, who, according to the words of the Duke of Saxe-Weymar were « their

¹ It has been recently asserted by the Dutch press, in reply to this passage of the original text, that « at the period of the Conference of Chatillon, the Allies, in speaking of the sacrifices made by England to reconstitute Holland, stated in their protocol of 13th March, 1814, that the national patriotism of these people render them worthy to take their place amongst the nations of Europe, but that they made no mention of Belgium. » The subsequent Note will be sufficient to prove that the Allies did speak of Belgium, and that in the most definite and unequivocal manner.

own liberators » to reestablish their independence¹.

Whatever may have been the claims of Austria at that period, Holland at all events had not the shadow of a pretension to any part of the Belgic territory. The Allies also, with the exception of Austria, had no other claims over Belgium than the right of military occupation, and this occupation perhaps would not have been effected, had not the population of the Belgic provinces, as well as those of the Rhine, flown to arms, not only to rid themselves of a despotic thralldom, but to regain that independence which the Duke of Saxe-Weimar declared to be the just recompense of their noble conduct². But the pretensions of the Belgians to

¹ Proclamation of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar and General Bulow to the Belgic nation, — « Deputies from all parts of the Belgic provinces have arrived at our head-quarters, and thus prove to me that the inhabitants of these fine provinces are animated with the same Spirit. The hope of shaking off the insupportable yoke of foreign tyranny gives them the necessary courage to become *their own liberators*, and thus to follow the example of their own ancestors. I shall hasten to encourage this noble movement, and I will support it with all the force at my disposal, in proportion as I advance. Adhere, to this word of order, Inhabitants of Belgium! Let that Belgium once so flourishing revive! But let her revive under the ægis of order and liberty! Her independence cannot fail to be the result.

(Signed)

Duke of Saxe-Weimar.

General Bulow. »

« February 1814. »

Such are the words of the allied generals. Such their opinion of the claims of Belgium to liberty and independence.

² At Ghent the populace tore up the pavement and attached the

independence are not only founded on their having been declared to be « their own liberators , » but upon the formal proclamations of the allied sovereigns who declared in the face of Europe that « the object of the war was to re-establish the independence of the countries oppressed by France. The high contracting Powers », adds this document, « have consequently engaged themselves to direct all their efforts to this object ¹. »

The subsequent campaigns of the Allies having been crowned with success, Belgium regained her independence under the same assurances as Holland.

But she only regained it at the point of the sword to lose it by that of the pen ; to lose it against her own will and without having been called upon to assist at least, in an equitable or even politic manner, in the settlement of her future destinies. We say impolitic ; for had public opinion been consulted—had the manifestation of that opinion so unequivocally expressed by the rejection of the

French troops, and various other towns followed its example. Immediately also upon the arrival of the Allies, four regiments of infantry, and one of Hussars, one of light horse and another of artillery were raised by voluntary enrolment. These regiments were commanded, amongst others, by the Duke d'Aremberg, the prince de Croy and Count Vanderburgh. On the 30 March, 1814, when General Maison wished to recapture Tournay and opened the siege the Belgic artillery mainly contributed to his repulse.

¹ 1st article of Convention of Reichenbach dated 1st June 1813.

Fundamental Law and by the most overt reclamations against a union with Holland, that incoherent union would not have taken place and the Allies would not have established the germs of the Revolution of 1830, the seeds of which were implanted in the foundation of the edifice at the first moment of its construction ¹.

The limits that divided Belgium from Holland during the inter regnum of 18 months, that is, from February 1814, when she regained her independence, down to the 25th of August, when the Prince Sovereign of the Netherlands took the reins of government were those which separated Holland from France in virtue of the treaty of the 16th May 1795, that is to say, in addition to its present limits as existing under the *statu quo*, Belgium contained North Brabant and the whole of Flemish Zealand ².

When the Fundamental Law was submitted for acceptance to the Belgians in 1815, the Notables of Flemish Zealand, of the whole of Luxemburg and Limburg, including Venloo and Maestricht, were convoked for the purpose of voting *as Belgians* in the same manner as the Notables of the

¹ The Fundamental Law, which was destined to consecrate the union of Belgium and Holland, was proposed for the acceptance of the Belgic Notables, and rejected by 796 votes against 527. It was nevertheless carried into execution and became the law of the land.

² Flemish Zealand comprises all that portion of the Dutch territory on the left bank of the Scheldt.

remaining Belgic provinces : whereas in the Dutch Provinces,—and here, we beg to point out the distinction,—the States General were assembled in double numbers and called upon to vote in conformity with the ancient constitution and customs of the United Provinces.

Having shown what were the limits of Belgium in 1814 and 1815, it may not be irrelevant to state that at the period of promulgating the fundamental code or charter, that country consisted of the French departments of the Lys, Scheldt, Jemmapes, Dyle, two Nethes, Sambre and Meuse, Ourte, Lower Meuse, and Forêts (Luxemburg), as stated in the 2d article of that code.

Now when Belgium forcibly separated herself from Holland in 1830, the natural result of the rupture was a return by the former to the limits she occupied prior to the union. Indeed the Conference itself appears to have recognised the justice of this proceeding from the very first outbreaking of the Revolution ; for it was stipulated by the first protocol, that the respective troops should reciprocally retire behind the line which separated the possessions of the Prince Sovereign of the United Provinces prior to the treaty of the 30th May 1814, from those which were united to his territory in order to form the Netherland's kingdom in virtue of the said treaty of Paris and those of Paris and Vienna in the year 1815.

This injunction was complied with, and Belgium,

in virtue of the convention guaranteeing the *statu quo* and *uti possidetis*, has thus continued to occupy the territory assigned to her before she was united to Holland; the limits of which territory are strictly those that formed the line of demarcation between the *northern* and *southern* provinces sharing the Union, that is, with the exception of Flemish Zealand, which, as before stated, had continued to form a part of Belgium until the King of the Netherlands detached it from the department of the Scheldt (West Flanders), and united it with Dutch Zealand on the opposite shores of that river. This being the case, it cannot be asserted that the Belgians have encroached upon or that they occupy any portion of the Dutch territory, to which Holland or the Germanic Confederation can put forth any antecedent claim ¹.

The Netherland's cabinet have attempted to set aside these facts by arguments less just than specious; for, in advancing their claims to Flemish Zealand, to Venloo, Maestricht, and the *enclaves* alluded to in the preceding note, they founded their pretensions upon the ancient territorial position of Holland prior to 1793, that is to say, prior to the promulgation of the decree of the French Convention ², which declared that

¹ The only territorial claims to which Holland has any pretension in virtue of ancient possession are those arising from her former sovereignty over the 59,000 souls, known as the Dutch *enclaves* or *Pays des Généralités*.

² This decree, though strongly opposed by several members of the

Belgium should henceforth form an integral portion of the French territory; whereas, in asserting her pretensions to Luxemburg, and in stipulating for the rigid payment of the debt, she invokes the order of things resulting from and established by the treaties of 1814, arguments that are not only in contradiction one with the other, but as devoid of sound logic as they are of equity. Common reason and common justice point out that when two countries united for a time under one sceptre or administration are separated, each should not only return to the territorial limits respectively occupied by them at the period of their union, but that they should equally divide the debts and engagements contracted by them during their partnership.

Under the old *régime*, that is to say, prior to 1790, the present province of Limburg formed a part of the Austrian Netherlands excepting Venloo and the *Pays des Généralités*, and the sovereignty of Maestricht, half of which latter belonged to Holland and the other half to the Prince Bishop of Liège which latter prelacy is now represented by and belongs to Belgium; for the moiety formerly belonging to the United Provinces, with all its rights and privileges, as well as the whole of the *enclaves* in Limburg, were ceded to the French republic and thus incorporated with Belgium by the treaty of Paris of 5th January, 1800. Holland was indemnified for this cession by

convention, as utterly at variance with the wishes of the Belgic people, passed into law upon the 30th September, 1793.

other *enclaves* and acquisitions which the French republic possessed within the Duchy territory, in virtue of the treaty of the 16th May 1795. Consequently, if treaties are irrevocably binding and obligatory, Holland can have no claim whatever even to the repossession of the *enclaves* in question, nor can she be entitled to indemnity, having already received indemnification, unless indeed she were to restore the objects thus received, or carry their value to the common account.

As to Luxemburg, it surely cannot be pretended to argue that it has not formed an integral portion of Belgium for several centuries. According to the Pragmatic Sanction of the Emperor Charles V., approved and adhered to by all Europe, it was stipulated that the Belgic provinces, of which *Luxemburg formed a part*, should henceforth be irrevocably united¹; and in fact the province of Luxemburg never has been separated from Belgium from that period down to the present hour. Even when the treaty of London of June 1814 united the Austrian Netherlands with Holland, no difference or exception was made between Luxemburg and the other Belgic provinces. What other evidence is necessary to prove that Luxemburg has invariably been considered as forming an integral portion of Belgium?

It is true that the King of the Netherlands was

¹ This Pragmatic Sanction was dated 4th November, 1549.

created Grand Duke of Luxemburg by the 67th article of the treaty of Vienna (1815) : but this creation was not so much the result of his being a prince of the house of Nassau as from his being sovereign, of the Belgic provinces, and thus to enable him to assume the position assigned to him according to the ancient principles of public law¹. In fact, at the suggestion and demand of the committee appointed to draw up the Fundamental Law and in conformity with the precedents established by the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles V., the King of the Netherlands declared that Luxemburg should henceforth form an integral portion of the Netherlands². In consequence of this, a

¹ All the world knows that the sovereigns of England are Dukes of Cornwall. Now, supposing that through any public convulsion the present dynasty were to be removed from the throne, would any separate claims for rights or privileges resulting from that duchy be admitted in the event of any amicable arrangement.

² The following is an extract of the report of the committee. « The province of Luxemburg, which assumes the title of Grand Duchy and which replaces in your Majesty's house his German possessions becomes an addition of immense importance to the kingdom. We have been informed, sire, of the right accruing to the youngest of your sons, from the family pact, over the Nassau states. We have not lost sight of the just claims of this prince to an indemnity, but we think that it is the province of the States General, either by the cession of domains or by some other means, to propose whatever measure may best accord with the equity of the case and with that debt of gratitude prescribed by the nation. »

The message of the King which accompanied the proposed law of 25th May, 1816, is explicit upon this point — It runs thus. —

pecuniary indemnity, in national domains was granted to Prince Frederic of the Netherlands in exchange for any pretensions that H. R. H. or the *agnats* of the house of Nassau might have had upon that province. A law dated 25th May 1816 conferred upon H. R. H. various domains in the vicinity of Breda, which were accepted by him ; is it not fair justice therefore to say that neither Prince Frederic nor the *agnats* of his house have any claims upon Luxemburg, and that, having once received their equivalent, they cannot, to use a trite expression, « have their bread and eat it ' ? »

« Noble and Puissant Sirs,

« When during the course of the negotiations of the Congress of Vienna, we ceded the Nassau country and the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg was placed under our sovereignty, our beloved younger son might reasonably have expected to have seen transferred to the Grand Duchy those rights which he had previously acquired of succeeding to our German dominions. But motives of general interest determined us to render the union of *all the Belgic provinces* under the same sovereignty as intimate and as durable as possible. Prince Frederic not having hesitated to comply, it appears conformable with justice and worthy of the nation to compensate him in a proper-manner for the loss of his expectations. The committee that drew up the Fundamental Law has in fact suggested the cession of a portion of domains as the simplest means ; and the investigation that we have subsequently ordered shows that the domains situated near Breda would form a proper whole and would furnish an annual revenue nearly equivalent to the advantages derived from our ancient country of Nassau.

(Signed) William. »

'These domains are, it is true, situated within the province of North Brabant: but when it is considered that 94 millions of Belgic domains were irrevocably sold during the union, it is fair to assume that this ought to be taken as a set off.

During the whole period that Holland and Belgium were united the connection of Luxemburg with the southern provinces was so intimate that no distinction whatever either in general or local administration was made between one and the other. This connection was in fact so homogeneous, that as soon as the principle of public representation was established by giving an equal number of deputies to the northern and southern provinces, a principle not strictly accordant with justice, seeing that the population of the latter was double that of the former, the representatives of Luxemburg were registered as forming part of the deputies assigned to the southern provinces.

But we can adduce another proof of the light in which Luxemburg was considered even by the Hague's cabinet itself in 1830 ; for when the King and States General resolved upon and voted the separation between the two countries in the month of October of that year, no distinction was made between Luxemburg and the remaining Belgic provinces : so much so indeed that, upon the opening of the States General for 1830-1831 , three Luxemburg deputies , who expressed their intention of taking their seats in the house, were excluded, from the mere fact of their belonging to the southern provinces, the separation of which from Holland had been already decreed.

Having thus explained the position in which Luxemburg was considered by the States Ge-

neral and the Hague cabinet at the epoch in question, we will examine the subject in another point of view, not embracing a question of right, but of equity and prospective policy. As regards the first of these two points, let us ask if it would not be an act, to say the best of it, most unreasonable, to deprive Belgium of a section of her population, which has formed an «inseparable» portion of her territory since the promulgation of the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles V? A population that is linked to Belgium by ties of sympathy, family alliance, connection of property, unity of purpose and sentiments, and, in short, by all those bonds that most intimately connect a people who have regarded each other as brethren during many centuries, and whose ardent desire it is to rise and fall, live and die together. If there be not great hardship in such an attempt, then there would be no hardship in separating the county of Kent from Great Britain and making it over to the dominion of the King of Hanover.

Would it be accordant with humanity or a just consideration for the future interests and security of this population, to place them under the sway of a government against whom they have risen in successful rebellion, whom they aided in expelling from their territory and towards whom they incessantly evinced the utmost hostility? A government, with whom they have no connecting feeling or link whatever, and against whose restoration

they never ceased to combat either with arms in their hands or through the more tranquil but not less strenuous medium of their representatives' protestations. Far be it from us to urge the Belgians or any portion of the Belgians to plunge themselves and perhaps all Europe into war, in order to support their claims however just, but we cannot avoid fully concurring in the patriotic sentiments of the original author of this paraphrase when he exclaims, « where is the example to be met with of a people who, in the midst of profound peace, under a monarch strong in his own position and alliances; a people possessing a numerous and well organized army, great resources and what it considers a just cause: where is the people, we repeat, who under such circumstances ever tranquilly abandoned a portion of its population and territory to foreign dominion? »

We are well aware that the impulse of necessity is often paramount to that of equity, especially as regards the adjustment of territorial or political questions, and that the few must be frequently sacrificed to the interests of the many: but where in this case is the necessity as regards the one, or the palpable advantage as relates to the other? We are at a loss to comprehend what difference it can make to Europe, or, in other words, to the Germanic Confederation, whether Luxemburg remain under the sceptre of Leopold or be removed under that of King William. But we will

return to this point presently, and in the mean time proceed to examine the question of debts and arrears, the adjustment of which is founded upon date and pramisses equally injurious and not less unjust to Belgium.

At the period when the Netherland's kingdom was first constituted, Belgium had no funded debt but she possessed immense resources in landed domains. Indeed, when her debt was funded in 1818, it only amounted to the trifling sum of 289,719 flor. (say 24,250 L.). Holland, on the other hand, came to the hymeneal altar encumbered with enormous burdens; partly resulting from the old debts which she had contracted in order to carry on the war against Belgium, as far back as the times of Albert and Isabella, and partly arising from the taxes and charges of various kinds and sorts that were the fruits of French invasion.

It is here necessary to observe that the principal cause of the difference in the financial position of the two countries, both of which had suffered from the effects of foreign invasion, was the different system pursued in each. In Holland all burdens, of whatever nature they might have been, were debited to the country at large, or rather to the government, which had raised loans for the purpose of meeting its extraordinary expenditure. Whereas in Belgium these extraordinary charges had been supported by private individuals or by the corporations of the different cities and towns. Thus, whilst

the landed proprietors and corporations of Belgium had been repeatedly ruined by wars and invasions of all kinds, this class of persons as well as the merchants and municipal bodies in Holland had continued to prosper and had increased their capital to a prodigious extent during the preceding ages. But, as Belgium had constantly supported the burdens of the moment, without having recourse to loans, she had not sacrificed the future to the present, and thus she came to the union, not only disengaged from all encumbrances, but with every prospect of immediate prosperity. Holland, on the other hand, having adopted a different financial system, and thus lost sight of the future, was overwhelmed with an accumulation of debt that increased the most serious embarrassments. Notwithstanding this, notwithstanding the utter difference between the past financial position and existing obligations of the two countries, Belgium was forthwith saddled with the moiety of all the old Dutch debts, and thus compelled to pay collectively what she had already paid for individually or through the channel of her corporations.

One fact alone will suffice to prove the extent to which Belgium was compelled to submit to the exigencies of her new masters in 1815. When Holland, borne down by the torrent of war was forced to yield to the sway of Napoleon, her debt followed the fate of that of France, and was arbi-

trarily reduced two thirds (*tiercé*¹). But, however unjust this measure might have been in the first instance, the evil was past and forgotten, and the new kingdom was not liable to any other claims upon it than those actually existing at the moment of its constitution. This was acknowledged by the States General and by the King himself at the moment of the regeneration of Holland, and was the more equitable in principle, since the greatest portion of the old reduced bonds had passed into the hands of speculators who had purchased them from their original holders at an almost nominal price².

But the Prince Sovereign of the Netherlands was no sooner apprized of the intention of the Allies to unite Belgium to Holland, than he immediately took measures for reviving the reduced debt, amounting to *eleven hundred and forty six millions of florins* (say 95 millions L. sterl.), and then converted it into what is known at the present day as the deferred debt³. One singular circumstance attended this resuscitation, which gave rise to sundry subsequent reports by no means favorable to the Netherland's government; for, although the

¹ Oseander, *Exposé des Finances des Pays-Bas*, p. 9.

² White's *Belgic Revolution*, vol. I. p. 54.

³ The official statement presented on the 2d of Oct., 1815, to the States General gives the amount of active debt at 573,153,530 florins and that of the deferred debt at 1,146,307,061 florins. — *Van Hogendorp, Réunion de la Hollande et de la Belgique*.

stipulation that Belgium should take upon herself the part payment of all the Dutch debts was definitively settled in London on the 20th June, 1814, these stipulations were kept secret until July, 1815. Consequently, it was very currently reported that the King of the Netherlands and his ministers had availed themselves of this period to purchase a large portion of the reduced bonds at a very low price.

Be that as it may, upon the union of the two countries the annual interest of the Dutch active debt amounted to 14,500,000 florins¹. This debt

¹ The following is the state of the national debt on the 15th of January, 1829, such as it was presented by the Government to the States General upon the discussion of the decennial budget for 1830-1840. The interests contracted during the partnership are stated therein, deducting the sums reimbursed :

Ancient Dutch debt	fl.	14,383,766.12
Austro-Belgic debt.		403,610.32
Old debt of southern provinces		282,719.66
Arrears of Low Countries.		353,420.92
* Deficit for 1819 and previous years		577,075. »
* « for 1820		194,700. »
* Deficit for previous years		1,422,550. »
* Extinction of pensions.		1,682,300. »
* Dutch dykes		315,125. »
	fl.	19,615,267.02
Deduct the sums ordered to be cancelled by the law of 24th Dec. 1829.		350,000. »
remain.	fl.	19,265,267. 02

The items marked with a * are those contracted during the union. No mention was made by the Dutch P. P. to the Conference of the sums reimbursed.

was reduced at the period of the revolution to 14,383,766, a reduction so trifling as to be scarcely worth mentioning, especially as new burdens had been contracted, which, combined with the Austro-Belgic debt and various arrears, formed a total of annual interests amounting to 19,265,267 florins, as given in the preceding note. According to this calculation, the debts contracted by the two countries during their partnership amounted to 3,841,724 florins, annual interest, which augmentation was, however, compensated for, in a great measure, by the acquisition of new colonies and the construction of a formidable navy. To both of which Belgium had contributed, and consequently ought to have been credited with her fair portion of the value; for, had the Conference strictly adhered to those principles of equity that are held as invariable maxims and rules upon the dissolution, of all social partnerships, and which are equally applicable upon the more enlarged theatre of political controversy, the Conference, we repeat, would then have made up not only a just account of engagements, but of actual assets, and divided the latter as well as the former between the two parties.

Indeed, this principle seems to have been appreciated and admitted by the Conference in the early stages of the negotiation; for, upon referring to the 20th protocol, Annex. B., we find the following passage: « *It is both necessary and just that, when*

Holland and Belgium shall be separated, each shall take upon herself the debts with which they were charged before the union. » Such also was the principle formally recognised by the Netherland's plenipotentiaries, who, within a few days of the period when the award was determined by the Conference, declared¹, that *an incontestable principle* resulted from the examination of the question of debts, the application of which would prevent many errors and abstractions, viz. that at the epoch of separation, the two parties should retire with all that each had brought to the common stock, and that they should divide in a just proportion (the proportion of the population for instance) all debts contracted during the partnership. »

This *incontestable* principle, founded on strict and impartial justice, was not only admitted by the Conference and by Holland, but was consecrated in the most formal manner by the former, as will be seen by the 12th article of the treaty of the 28th of June, commonly called, « The 18 Articles. »

« The division of debts, » says this article, « shall be regulated in such a manner as to allot to each of the two countries, the total of the debt which originally, before the union, belonged to the territories of which those countries consisted, and to divide in a just proportion those contracted in common. »

¹ Note of Netherland's P. P., dated 26th Sept. 1831, annexed to 44th protocol.

Now had this principle been adhered to, it is evident that the whole of the debt to be borne by Belgium would not have exceeded 2,500,000 florins annual interests, in lieu of 8,400,000 as determined by the 13th article of the November treaty.

This point is of too great importance to be lightly treated. We will therefore pause to enter into some details and to examine at the same time whether the «incontestable principle, » proclaimed by the Netherlands cabinet and sanctified in the first instance by the Conference, was strictly attended to when the judges pronounced their arbitration. Founding its calculations upon the tables and valuations furnished by the Dutch plenipotentiaries who *guaranteed* their correctness, the Conference declared by its 48th protocol that, « *in the event of these tables being found inexact, notwithstanding so formal a guarantee, the five Powers should consider themselves entitled, from this simple fact, to declare as null and void whatever results might arise from the calculations to which these tables had served as a basis.* »

Then, grounding their division of the debts of the Netherland's kingdom upon the 6th article of the convention of the 8th July, 1814, which stipulated that *all charges and benefits* should be considered as common to both parties¹, the Conference

¹ The 6th article of the protocol of 21st July, 1814, annexed to the treaty of Vienna states, in regard to Holland and Belgium, that, « as the *charges* as well as the *benefits* ought to be common to both, the debts

determined that all debts of Belgic origin were to be entirely supported by Belgium, and that the burdens contracted during the union should be equally divided between her and Holland '.

Let us first proceed to examine the nature of these charges, and then look to the question of advantages.

In the first place, in return for any commercial advantages that might subsequently accrue to Belgium, she was charged with the annual payment to Holland of 600,000 florins. But let the protocol of the Conference speak for itself : —

« The annual interest upon the total amount of the above debt, amounting in round numbers to 10,100,000 florins of the Netherlands, the debt of Belgium under this head will appear to be 5,050,000 florins.

« Moreover, the Austro-Belgian debt having belonged exclusively to Belgium before her union with Holland, it was deemed equally just that this debt should be borne exclusively by Belgium for the future.

« The interest at 2½ per cent. upon the portion of this debt called active, as well as the fund set apart for the redemption of that portion called

contracted up to the period of the union, by the Dutch Provinces on one side and by the Belgians on the other, must be placed to the debit of the Netherland's treasury.— *Papers relating to Belgium.*

' According to the 48th protocol, it was decided that the debt should be divided in the proportion of 15:30, that is to say, in equal portions.

deferred debt, being estimated in round numbers at 750,000 Netherlands florins of annual interest, Belgium will have to support under this second head another debt of 750,000 florins of interest.

« The Conference, constantly actuated by rules of equity, found that, according to the principles and views by which it is guided, a further debt, which was originally borne by Belgium previous to her union with Holland, namely the debt inscribed for Belgium in the Great Book of the French Empire, and which, according to its budgets, would appear to amount to 4,000,000 of francs, or 2,000,000 florins of the Netherlands of annual interest, should also be placed to the charge of the Belgian treasury. The debt therefore with which Belgium would be charged, under this third head, would amount to 2,000,000 Netherlands florins of annual payment.

« In fine, considering the advantages of commerce and navigation, the enjoyment of which Holland is bound to give to the Belgians, and the sacrifices of different kinds which the separation has entailed upon her, the plenipotentiaries of the five Powers were of opinion that there ought to be added to the three heads above described, a sum of 600,000 florins of interest, which would form, with those debts, a total of 8,400,000 Netherlands florins.

« Therefore, according to the unanimous opinion of the Conference, Belgium should remain defini-

tively charged with an annual interest of 8,400,000 florins on account of the division of the public debt of the united kingdom of the Netherlands. »

The following table will give a more concise idea of the sums, which amount altogether to 17,777,777 francs (say 711,110 L. st.) : —

Half of the debts contracted

during the union.	fl. 5,050,000
Austro-Belgic debt	» 750,000
Gallo-Belgic debt.	» 2,000,000
Advantages of navigation and commerce	» 600,000
	fl. 8,400,000

Having thus shown how the Conference arbitrated in regard to the partition of the debt, let us examine the validity of each article separately; and here we request the strict attention of the reader:

1st. Basing its calculation upon the documents furnished by the Netherland's plenipotentiaries, the Conference establishes that the divers debts contracted during the union shall be set down at 10,100,000 florins annual interest, and consequently debits Belgium with the half of this sum. Now, upon referring to the official report presented by the Government to the State General upon the 15th January 1829, this valuation will be found to disagree in the most striking manner, with the statement therein contained of the debts contracted

during the union ; the whole of which, according to that table , did not exceed 3,841,724 florins. Consequently, the half of the sum which ought to fall upon Belgium should be 1,920,862, and not 5,050,000 florins. Whence, let us ask, can this enormous difference arise ?

How comes it that the calculations of the Conference swell the amount of debt, contracted during the union, to 10,100,000, whilst the *official report* of the Netherland's government, presented to the States General in 1830, does not exceed 3,841,724 florins for this item ? This error, for error it must be, can only be accounted for by the Conference having grounded its valuations upon documents furnished by Holland, and from its having charged Belgium with a moiety, 1st, of Dutch arrears; 2dly, of the loan of 110 millions raised by the Sinking Fund Syndicate; and, 3dly, of the loan of 30 millions raised by the colonies. Such is the conclusion that results from referring to the table annexed to the 48th protocol ¹.

Upon examining these three last items, it becomes evident that the Conference has been *led into error*,

¹ According to this table, the calculations of the Conference were established upon the following basis : —

Dutch arrears.	} 2 1/2	fl. 353,420
Debts contracted in common.		» 3,841,725
Syndicate	4 1/2	» 4,950,000
Colonial Loan	3 1/2	» 1,050,000
		fl. 10,195,145

and that it ought not to have assigned any portion of them to Belgium.

1st. As regards the arrears due by the Low Countries, or to speak more distinctly, by Holland, it is incontestable that they were not contracted although they may have accumulated during the union; for they were the final outstanding remnants of the old Dutch debt not brought forward or admitted until the very day specified for the liquidation of the old debt of the southern provinces. Consequently, in virtue of the principles established by the Conference, these arrears ought to have been charged exclusively to Holland, in the same manner that the old Belgian debt was exclusively charged to Belgium.

2dly. As regards the loan of 116 millions, at 4½ per cent., raised by the syndicate, in virtue of the organic laws of that mysterious institution, which sum was reduced to 110 millions in 1830, it is no less certain that it did not form a part of the national debt, but that it was an operation of reduction, the object of which was to convert the old Dutch *deferred debt*, into a loan for the syndicate. Now, the mere *conversion* of a debt can in no way change its primitive character or attributes.

Its origin must continue identical, and the first contractors must and ought to remain alone responsible.

Here again, therefore, according to the prin-

ciples laid down by the Conference, by which each country was to resume its old debts, it is evident that this loan of 110 millions, which was only the conversion of the old Dutch deferred debt, ought to have been regulated by the same rules that would have saddled the amount upon Holland had that ancient Dutch debt not been converted. It is an error therefore, we repeat, on the part of the Conference, to class this item amongst the charges contracted by Belgium during the union.

We have stated that the *deferred debt* is essentially Dutch and of Dutch origin, for the Belgian and Austro-Belgian debts, together, only form a thirtieth of the whole; consequently, if any portion of the arrears of these debts had been reimbursed by the syndicate through the medium of the above loan, the amount ought to have been carried to account; but not a single florin was applied to this purpose. Where then is the community of interest or responsibility?

3dly. As regards the loan of 30 millions at 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., it must be observed that this sum was raised in virtue of a law dated 26th May, 1830, that is to say, within four months of the dissolution of the union, for no other object than the conversion of three previous loans effected by the East India colonies, for which the Netherland's government became security. Now, by the very terms of the law which authorized this operation, it results

that this was not a new debt contracted for mutual benefit, but a security for the fulfilment of past obligations. But, admitting by way of hypothesis that this were not the case, is it not accordant with common equity that, if Belgium is to be charged with the payment of half this colonial debt, she should be admitted to a corresponding equivalent, at all events that she should derive benefits from these colonies proportionate to the nature of her annual payments? But no such benefits are admitted or contemplated. Here again the Conference has been led into error in assigning this charge to Belgium as a mutual contract, or it has not adhered to its own principle of charges and advantages when it omitted to award a proportionate advantage to that country.

The next item we come to is the Austro-Belgian debt, which, it is essential to observe, was not a debt contracted for the use or defence of the Belgic provinces, as stated by the Conference, but a loan raised in these provinces and guaranteed by the Belgic States for the use of Austria, who required this sum to aid her so far back as the period of her wars with Turkey. But, notwithstanding the primary object and destination of this loan, the King of the Netherlands was induced to recognise it, in 1816, as a Belgic debt, not with the sanction of the States, but by a mere cabinet order. However, admitting this to be an accomplished fact against

which there can be no reclamation, let us see whether the cypher established by the Conference is correctly founded.

The amount of annual interests according to the valuation is 750,000 florins. Now, it is evident that this calculation must be erroneous, or that the official report of the national debt, presented as afore said to the States General in January, 1829, during the discussion of the decennial budget for 1830-1840, must have been grossly incorrect; for the annual interests of the debt in question are therein set down at 403,610 florins, giving a capital of 16,144,412 fl. in active and 32,288,824 florins in deferred debt not bearing interest. Thus showing a *difference* of 346,390 florins annual interests between the *official report* of the Netherland's government of January, 1829, and the *calculations* of the Conference in 1831.

It will be asserted, perhaps, that we have omitted to take into account the sums cancelled by the Sinking Fund; but to add these sums to the debt would be tantamount to the double employment of the same sum. Therefore, when it was asserted that the interests of the Austro-Belgic debt amounted to 750,000 florins, the persons making that assertion led the Conference

¹ The Netherland's budget was divided into two parts : one voted annually, the other decennially. The most important items of expenditure came under the latter head.—White's *Belgic Revolution*, I vol. p. 58.

into an error, the injurious results of which should not be visited upon Belgium.

The next item on the list is the charge called Gallo-Belgic debt which, according to the cyphers and observations contained in the 48th protocol of the Conference, amounted to *four* millions annual interests, and resulted from the French Empire or, in plainer terms, from debts incurred by the Belgic provinces during their junction with France. Now here again is a most extraordinary addition on the part of the Conference or a no less extraordinary omission on the part of the Netherland's government; for the tables already cited make no mention whatever of this debt, nor was such a sum ever included in any of the budgets of the Finance minister during the union of the two countries'. In fact, the whole debt of the southern provinces, as stated in the official return, only amounted to 282,719 florins. Here again therefore the Conference was misled when it was induced to believe that the Netherland's treasury was charged at the moment of the revolution with the annual payment of 4,000,000 of francs, resulting from the Great Book of the French Empire.

We now come to the item of 600,000 florins annual interests, which sum was charged to Belgium as an indemnification to Holland for certain

' If such a debt were due to France, why was it never claimed or paid; and, if paid, why was it concealed from the Chambers, or whence were the necessary funds derived?

commercial advantages to be granted by her to the former. Such, for instance, as the free use of the intermediary waters between the Scheldt and the Rhine and a passage by Sittard to the Prussian frontier, advantages neutralized and rendered of little utility to Belgium by the approaching termination of the railway from Antwerp to Cologne. But were these prospective advantages double the amount anticipated by the Conference, is it fair, we ask, to inflict upon Belgium the payment of any arrears upon this head. The annual payment of 600,000 florins was to be compensated for by the actual enjoyment of the benefits, whatever they might be; but to exact the payment of arrears would be to exact a tribute in return for a privation.

Before taking leave of the question of debts, we must return once more to that bearing reference to the charges contracted in common, in order to observe that the government only negotiated 20 out of the 68 millions of florins, authorized to be raised by the law of 27th December, 1822, for the purpose of meeting the expense of the pension list, the interests of which, according to the statements of the Dutch plenipotentiaries, amounted to 1,682,300 florins in 1830. The remaining 48 millions had not been negotiated as late as the 15th of January, 1829, but remained in the hands of the Syndicate, as appears from the returns presented to the States General at that

period¹. Now a loan is to all intents and purposes no loan until the period of its issue : consequently, these 48 millions not having issued and not having been borrowed, they ought to have been deducted from the capital and interests authorized by the law, which deduction, had it been made, would have reduced 600,000 florins from the portion of Belgium. If this latter sum has not been carried by us to the account of deduction to which we consider Belgium entitled, it is because we have not been able to procure a return of the sums belonging to this loan disbursed in 1829 and 1830 ; sums, however, which could not have been very important, since their application was limited by the law. Be this as it may, it is very evident that the Conference was deceived when it was informed that the whole of the 68 millions formed a part of the national debt. Two thirds of this sum were never issued.

Now, we think that we have pretty clearly proved that, *by basing its award upon the tables and declarations furnished and guaranteed as exact by the Dutch plenipotentiaries*², the Conference has

¹ *Etat de la Situation du Syndicat au 15 Janvier 1829.*

² The following are the notes by which the Dutch P. P. guaranteed the exactness of the calculations furnished to the Conference, as well as the amount of debt contracted during the union. They are too important to be omitted.

« Declaration of the Netherland's Plenipotentiaries.

« London, 4th Oct., 1831.

« Messieurs,

« We fully guarantee the exactitude of the calculation § 1 of the
5.

been led into a series of very grievous errors, and that in virtue of their own formal assertions they are not only at liberty, but directly called upon to revise their award

We will now reduce to a more narrow compass the different items in which the Conference has been led into error, and so that they may be more easily embraced and appreciated by the reader.

The Conference has been deceived :

1st. When it was led to estimate the amount of the annual interest of the Austro-Belgic debt at 750,000 instead of 403,610 florins.

2dly. When it was induced to believe that Belgium was or had been charged with a debt of 4,000,000 annual interests due to France.

3dly. When it was brought to set down the arrears, arising from the debts of the old United

letter you have done us the honor to address us, as well as the correctness of the cyphers mentioned in § 2.

Consequently the direct and indirect taxes, with the excise for the years 1827, 1828 and 1829, give as the medium paid by Holland 15731, and as that paid by Belgium 16731 ; and that, according to the last budgets, the debts contracted during the union present the following totals : —

2 1/2 p. cents.	. . . fl.	167,806,836
4 1/2 »	. . .	110,000,000
3 1/2 »	. . .	30,000,000

« N. B. And the reimbursable bonds mortgaged on the domains.

(Signed) « H. de Zuylen de Nyevelt,
for M. Falck and himself. »

Provinces, as a debt contracted during their subsequent union with Belgium.

4thly. When the conversion of the *old Dutch deferred debt* was declared to have been a *new debt* contracted during the union.

5thly. When it was prevailed upon to establish that the loan raised by the colonies was a new debt incurred during the union, when it was nothing more than a security for the conversion of ancient obligations.

6thly. When it was induced to pronounce the loan of 68,000,000, of which only one third was issued, and of which the other two thirds remained in the hands of the Syndicate, as a debt contracted during the connection of the two countries.

It would have been an easy matter to have entered into more ample details and to have added more minute calculations to support our arguments, but enough has been said to prove that, according to the « *incontestable principles* » of equity established by the Conference and proclaimed by the Dutch plenipotentiaries, the portion of the charges which have been saddled upon Belgium, as her fair portion of the debts contracted during the union, added to her ancient obligations, ought not to have exceeded 2,607,191 in lieu of 8,400,000 florins annual interests.

The following is the summary of these items as they ought to be charged according to the official report so often alluded to : —

Old debt of southern provinces	fl.	282,719
Austro-Belgic debt	»	403,610
Half of common debt.	»	1,920,862
Total.	fl.	2,607,191

Thus showing a difference of 5,792,809 fl. between the sum awarded by the Conference and based upon calculations guaranteed as exact by the Dutch plenipotentiaries and the calculations that plainly result from the official estimates of the Netherland's government in 1829.

Thus, when it is considered that the last item of the above table represents a capital of eighty millions of francs; — when it is considered that this augmentation of debt was accumulated during a period of profound peace and at a moment when the commerce and industry of the Netherlands were said to have reached an extraordinary degree of prosperity; — when it is considered that the Netherlands government alienated irrevocably upwards of 94 millions fl. of domains. — the Belgians cannot accused of being unreasonable if they feel dissatisfied at the magnitude even of this sum, especially as the greater part was raised for the exclusive benefit of their quondam brethren.

It has been shown that, according to the « *incontestable principles* » admitted by all parties, the portion of Belgic debt to be paid to Holland ought not to have exceeded 2,607,191 instead of 8,400,000 florins. But in fact the former sum ought to be still

further reduced by the bonus remaining in the hands of the Syndicate upon the day of separation; a bonus that must have been far from inconsiderable when it is remembered that the institution in question had disposed of Belgic domains to the value of 94 millions of florins. A further reduction ought also to have been made in consideration of the large surplus of the loan of 68 millions, still remaining in hand, and of which the interest may be valued in round numbers at 600,000 florins; which sums taken together would have reduced the quota of the Belgian charges to about *two millions of florins*, annual interests.

But supposing that the arbitration of the Conference had been founded upon correct data and that no reclamations were possible, is it not just, is it not in unison with the principles of equity which doubtless guided the Conference, that Belgium should come in for her share of the assets as well as the debit? Is she not entitled to an equal share of the advantages accruing from the union? Let us now see whether this principle has been adhered to.

By a treaty concluded on the 17th March, 1824, between Great Britain and the Netherlands, and ratified by the States General, the former ceded to the latter divers possessions in Sumatra and the adjacent islands, in exchange for Malacca and the Dutch dependencies in Singapore. But, in consequence of certain claims made by England, a sum

of 100,000 L. was paid by the Netherlands in addition to the colonial exchange ¹. This being the case, Belgium ought to be credited with a moiety of the benefits arising from this pecuniary arrangement; that is, a moiety equal to the disbursement and corresponding results. She ought also to receive a moiety of the benefits proceeding from the acquisition of New Guinea, and the neighbouring islands, which were added to the colonial possessions of the Netherlands during the union of the two countries.

If Belgium was not entitled to demand possession of the whole, or at least a share, of the fleet left at Antwerp when the Allies quitted that place in 1814, she was certainly justified in claiming the half of the national shipping constructed at the common expense during the union. It is needless to state that the value of this fleet, consisting of 6 ships of the line, 19 frigates, 17 corvettes, 9 brigs and a vast number of gun-boats and other craft, amounted to a most formidable cypher, for the construction, arming and maintenance of which large sums were annually voted and paid for in common by the two nations.

¹ This convention must not be confounded with that of the 13th August, 1814, by which England restored Java and other colonies taken from the Dutch on condition of the former paying one million sterling to Sweden (as an indemnity for the cession of Guadaloupe) and two millions more to the Netherlands to be employed in the construction of certain fortresses.

Now, according to the most trite principles of equity, the above fleet could only be considered as common property, at all events all such parts of it as had been constructed during the union ; consequently, if Belgium had supported and supplied half the expense of creation and maintenance, why was she not credited with half the ultimate value? A demand to this effect was in fact made by Belgium, but it was passed over without notice or at least without reply.

Having demonstrated the existence of various palpable errors, discrepancies and omissions in the valuations of the Conference as regards the debt, let us ask what there is which militates against a revision, and thence against a more equitable arrangement? Indeed the revision is not only rendered easy, but is entirely consistent with the avowed declarations and intentions of the five Powers ; for it is essential to bear in mind that, although the Dutch plenipotentiaries had guaranteed the correctness of their estimates, the Conference declared that, *«if notwithstanding this formal guarantee the tables should prove to be incorrect, the five Courts would, from this fact, consider themselves justified in regarding as null and void the result of the calculations to which these estimates had served as a basis.»* The tables and estimates have been found in exact. Whence then the hesitation to pronounce the nullity of the results?

During the discussion of the 24 Articles, in the

secret committee of the Belgic Chambers in October, 1831, the House received communication of the protocol in question. It instantly discovered and protested against the error that had been made in regard to the *four millions* of French debt, before alluded to, but it nevertheless thought that it might safely give its adhesion to this article of the treaty; for, on considering the formal declarations of the Conference, a rectification of this error appeared to be both natural and inevitable.

Besides, the protestation of Count Sebastiani against the partition of the debt, as proposed in the protocol of the 27th of January 1830, was fresh in the minds of the deputies. Speaking in the name of the French government, His Excellency stated, in his dispatch of the 1st March 1831, that the division of debt « *was a question of private rather than of public interest, for the solution of which the Conference is less competent and less enlightened than for the solution of any other question* ¹. » The Conference, admitting the justice of this remark, returned for answer that this was « *only a proposition put forward in order that might be discussed between the two principal parties* ². »

Relying upon these assurances, so formally, so

¹ Extract from Count Sebastiani's dispatch to Prince Talleyrand, dated 1st March, 1831.

² Protocol N^o 20, Annex B.

unequivocally pronounced, Belgium felt confident that ultimate justice would be awarded to her. But her confidence does not appear to have been borne out by results ; for, upon her government soliciting the execution of the above-mentioned formal guarantees, the Conference peremptorily declared, in a Note, dated 12 November 1831, that neither the letter nor spirit of the 24 Articles could henceforth undergo any modifications.

Thus, Belgium was loaded with nearly half the national debt of the Netherlands kingdom, or indeed more than half, if we deduct the portions cancelled by the Sinking Fund Syndicate, or raised for the benefit of that Syndicate in order to meet the momentary exigencies of the Government.

It was loaded with the moiety, not in the equitable manner stipulated by the Conference, but upon erroneous and partial data—not in accordance with the burdens actually incurred during the union, but with those contracted prior to that event. Is it then too much to assert that, if the great Powers were determined to saddle Belgium with the payment of half of the whole Netherlands debt, they ought, in common justice, to have awarded her an equivalent portion of the whole assets of the kingdom, as well as a due share of the benefits arising from the colonies? For it stands to reason that, in all dissolutions of partnership and partitions of property resulting therefrom, the assets as well as the debts must be

carried to account and equally divided between the parties. The basis of separation, annexed to the 12th protocol, lays down as a stipulation that *the Belgians shall be permitted free access to the Dutch colonies upon the same footing and with the same rights and advantages as the inhabitants of Holland*¹. But it is needless to state that this assurance has no prospect of fulfilment.

There is another point which ought to have been taken into consideration, but was lost sight of during the negotiations. Belgium, as we have shown, was rigidly burthened with the payment of the half of the old Dutch debt, whilst Holland was left to liquidate as she thought proper the remainder of the Netherlands debt, and consequently all those of pure Belgic origin; such, for instance, as the obligations called *Engagères*, (the government obligations), the bonds and engagements arising from the requisitions and stores furnished to the allied armies, as far back as the Duke of York's campaigns, as well as the loans raised by the towns and provinces for the purchase or payment of divers objects that had become State property. Now, although the Netherlands government had admitted the justice of all similar claims in Holland, and this upon the first examination of the Dutch debt, it invariably refused to liquidate the debts of the southern provinces, which refusal was tanta-

¹ Basis of separation annexed to 12th protocol.

mount to pronouncing the definitive ruin of the Belgic holders of the bonds in question.

What then results from all this, or rather what must result, if the Conference does not revise and rescind its decisions? Why that Belgium would be charged with the payment of an enormous debt never contracted by her! That she would be compelled to support not only her moiety of the debts incurred during the partnership, but the half of all those appertaining solely to Holland, whilst the latter would reserve to herself all the assets, and all the advantages arising from the union! Belgium would then be loaded with half of the whole debt of the Netherland's kingdom, contracted, as aforesaid, in common, whilst Holland would exclude her from any participation whatever of those colonies, purchased at the common expense, as well as from all participation in the fleet constructed and armed by the same means! Belgium would be compelled to make good her share of the security for the loans raised for the benefit of the colonies, but she would be debarred from any proportionate return, and indeed from free access to these colonies!

Let us now compare these results with the conduct of the Allies to France in 1815. After that country had been twice overrun and conquered by foreign armies, a tribute of 800 millions of francs was imposed upon her, a tribute considered insupportable by the French people, and

instantly referred to as one of the grievances of the restoration. But France is at least eight times more extensive and populous than Belgium; and yet the sum demanded of Belgium represents a capital of 711 millions of francs of active debt, exclusive of the deferred debt. The resources of France, however, were immense. She had not been exhausted and drained of her wealth during nearly a quarter of a century, as was the case with Belgium. Her domains were intact and her capabilities of reproduction inexhaustible. Whereas, during the fifteen years of the union between Belgium and Holland the former had suffered severely from financial mismanagement, and her domains, which offered the most efficient sources of revenue, had been for the most part alienated¹. Notwithstanding this, notwithstanding the avowed desire and evident policy of rendering her justice, she is charged with a tribute nearly equal in point of capital, but seven times greater, proportionally speaking, and twenty one times greater if the deferred debt be added, than the tribute imposed upon France².

The charge thus saddled in perpetuity upon Belgium may be taken at about a fourth of her

¹ Upwards of 150 millions florins of domains, including the 94 millions sold by the Syndicate, were alienated during the union.

² The comparison is of course based upon the relative amount of population.

whole annual receipts, and represents the resources arising from commercial transactions to the amount of nearly 400 millions, — charge, not of a temporary nature, but which must be endured as long as Belgium exists, and this without any proportionate compensation, except her independence, the value of which would be sensibly diminished not only to herself, but to Europe, if she be crippled in her very infancy. This prospect is looked upon with still greater anxiety when it is considered that Holland would annually receive from Belgium a sum of nearly 8 millions of francs without a single corresponding sacrifice ; and thus, if we include the sums drawn from her colonies which are now estimated at nearly 30 millions of francs, she would be in the annual receipt of nearly 50 millions of francs (the half of her budget), drawn from foreigners.

It has been attempted to console Belgium with the reflection that the injury inflicted upon her by the payment of this annual tribute to Holland, would be amply made up to her by the benefits that she would derive from her neutral position, and that by reducing her army she would have no difficulty in meeting the demands upon her treasury, without augmenting her taxation. This may be true, but the consequences would not be the less detrimental to Belgium ; for, supposing that the 18 millions which are now required for the service of the army were paid to Holland, it

is undeniable that, in lieu of being expended in the country and thus finding its way back to the pockets of the people through divers channels, as is the case at present, the whole of this sum would be utterly lost to the country which would thus be deprived of the benefits of a sum representing a capital of 400 millions, resulting from commercial transactions. Thus, independent of the Belgians being enabled to make the smallest reduction in their annual taxation all they could hope for would be to keep it within its present limits, and in lieu of profiting by the expenditure of a fourth of their budget within their own territory, they would find themselves impoverished to more than the full amount of the sums exported. It is not sufficient for a country that a state of neutrality, and consequent peace, should bring with it *no augmentation*, it is essential that there should be a tangible *diminution* of expenditure.

Such, however, must be the relative position of Holland and Belgium if the treaty were to be carried into effect without most important modifications, and this notwithstanding the declared intention of the Conference to mete out strict justice to both. Such a consummation cannot surely be desired by the great Powers; for the consequence would be that those who consider themselves as oppressed would bear an unceasing animosity to those for whom they would be sacrificed, and inevitably avail themselves of the first pretext to liberate themselves

from these onerous engagements ; a result the more probable, since in this instance the stronger body is that which is compelled to bow down to the weaker, and, strange contradiction! the body that emancipated itself from what is regarded as a foreign yoke, at the point of the sword, would thus be forced to become the tributaries of those whom it expelled from its soil.

It has been proved pretty clearly that the treaty of the 15th November, especially as regards the distribution of debt and general financial question, is not founded upon those principles of equity which, we feel convinced, were the predominant object of its founders. It has been no less clearly demonstrated that the treaty has nearly lost all its primitive compulsory character, partly from the obstinacy of Holland and partly from the retrocession of the great Powers. Let us ask then if it be consistent with justice or reason to expect that a free and spirited people shall tranquilly subscribe to conditions which are repugnant to the opinions of the whole population and tinged with the most incontestable proofs of past injustice and future injury ?

Belgium submitted in 1831 to conditions declared to be final and irrevocable ; but she did so only because the five Powers solemnly engaged to enforce the fulfilment of the treaty within a « brief delay. » She did so, because the critical position of Europe and that indeed of her own territory itself was such

that she looked to the immediate execution of the treaty as the means of forthwith consolidating her independence and of obtaining a position which might place that independence beyond the reach of all political vicissitudes. Following the example of her sovereign, she gulped down the bitter potion and yielded to the pressing solicitations of the five Courts in order to show her willingness to contribute to the maintenance of general peace. It would be more than unjust to return her evil for good and to recompense King Leopold for the sacrifices imposed upon him by crippling the energies and resources of his kingdom.

But the Belgium of 1838 scarcely resembles that of 1831. We have no longer a people rising from a state of anarchy and confusion and clinging with eagerness to any plank of salvation, no matter how feeble. Belgium now comprises a flourishing and united kingdom, firmly consolidated, and governed by a monarch as universally recognised as any other European crowned head. Yes! more universally recognised than other sovereigns whose kingdoms, if not their claims to the crown, may be said to merge in the night of time. Consequently, if Belgium is to negotiate with Holland, she has every right to do so upon the footing of a peer, an equal, —upon the footing that one free people is entitled to treat with another.

In 1830, Belgium had not been presented, if we may be permitted to employ the term, at court;

she had not assumed her proper place in the great circle of European states ; she had merely resumed the position which she had occupied during several centuries and of which the treaties of 1814 had deprived her for a short time. We say the place she had held, for it is a matter of history that the Belgic provinces had constantly formed a federal union, or rather a representative confederation, which confederation had given the Emperor Charles V. to Europe, in the same manner that it previously furnished Godfry de Bouillon, the liberator of Jerusalem, to Palestine.

The sovereignty of Belgium was united, it is true, under the same sceptre as that of Austria during more than a century, but its administration was nevertheless totally distinct. The Archduke of Austria and the sovereign of the Belgic provinces were two distinct monarchs united in the same person¹, in the same manner that the King of England and the King of Hanover were two kings in one person until the death of William IV. divided these two kingdoms, in virtue of the salic law, which excludes females from the sovereignty of the latter country.

This as regards Belgium was so strictly true that the Emperor maintained a court establishment at Brussels as completely distinct from that of

¹ It was as Arch-Dukes of Austria, and not as Emperors of Germany, that the Sovereigns of that house reigned in Belgium.

Vienna as the court of St. James was distinct from that of Hernhausen ; indeed H. I. M. as sovereign of the Low Countries not only received ambassadors from, but accredited diplomatic missions to, the same courts where he employed envoys as Archduke of Austria. Nay, more, as sovereign of the Low Countries he received at Brussels a minister plenipotentiary employed and paid by himself as sovereign of Austria, and sent to Vienna an envoy in his former capacity. But this was not all ; for, as sovereign of the Netherlands, he sometimes remained neuter during the wars that he carried on in divers parts as Archduke of Austria. Thus it was that Belgium, although subject to Austria, continued neuter in 1733 ; so much so that France, although at war with that nation in every other part of the world, respected this neutrality, and maintained an ambassador at the court of Brussels.

Belgium therefore merely resumed in 1830 the rank and station that she had previously occupied ; that is to say, a position essentially independent in fact and form, without being strictly so to the letter. The Conference therefore is not justified in calling upon her to make onerous sacrifices in order to purchase her nationality, since that nationality is a matter of historical notoriety and may be considered as being as ancient and even more so, in many points, than that of Holland.

We have already pointed out the position of Limburg and Luxemburg and the intimate and

«inseparable» connection of these provinces with Belgium. We have proved that they were not incorporated with Belgium, for the first time, in 1830, but that, with the exception of the few *enclaves* in Limburg, for which Holland had received an equivalent elsewhere, they had formed an integral part either of ancient Belgium or of the district of Liège from a remote period. As a further proof of this, it is merely necessary to state that the country commonly known as the Austrian Netherlands was composed of Limburg, Luxemburg, Guelders (of which Ruremonde was the chieftown), Flanders, Hainalt, Namur, Antwerp, Malines and Tournay-Tournesis¹.

In virtue of the treaty of the 26th of June, 1548², Germany renounced all immediate jurisdiction over the Belgic provinces, including Luxemburg, merely reserving what was termed a right of « *tuition* » over the countries formerly composing the Burgundian circle, and in the following year the emperor Charles V. issued his celebrated Pragmatic Sanction, which, as previously stated, decreed that all the Belgic provinces, including Luxem-

¹ Malines now forms a part of the province of Antwerp, and Tournay, with the adjacent district formerly called Tournesis, a part of Hainalt.

² By this treaty, known as the transaction of Augsburg, the Low Countries were erected into a circle of the Empire, under the title of « Circle of Burgundy. » According to the 3rd article, the sovereigns of the Low Countries were entitled to send ambassadors and to have a voice in the Diet upon the same footing as the Archdukes of Austria.

burg, should henceforth remain inseparable. By the act of appropriation, which vested the government of the Austrian Netherlands in the hands of the Archduchess Infanta Isabella, on the 6th May, 1598¹, it is likewise most distinctly stipulated that no dismemberment whatever of the Belgic territory shall take place, and when the Emperor Charles VI. was desirous to secure the undisputed sovereignty of these provinces to his eldest daughter, the illustrious Maria Theresa, he convoked all the provincial States in order to submit a new Pragmatic for their approbation². This convention published at Brussels on the 15th May, 1725, in virtue of a decision of the General States then assembled, again most explicitly consecrates the indivisibility and unity of the Belgic territory, of which all Luxemburg and the greater part of Limburg, ceded to Holland by the 24 Articles, then formed a part. It was under these conditions and in virtue of these stipulations that Maria Theresa inherited these territories.

It is consequently inconsistent with historical facts and the letter of past treaties and conven-

¹ This act of cession arose from the marriage of the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia with the Archduke Albert. It was signed at Madrid by Philip II. on the day mentioned in the text.

² This Pragmatic must not be confounded with that promulgated by the same monarch at Vienna 19th April, 1713, by which it was stipulated that, in default of male issue, the succession of the house of Austria should devolve upon the females and their descendants, according to the rights of primogeniture.

tions to assert that Luxemburg belonged to Germany. If any political connection did or does exist between that province and Germany the Belgic constitution has faithfully consecrated this connection. When Belgium effected her revolution she tore asunder all the links that bound her to Holland, but not these which connected her with the province of Luxemburg. This latter link is especially maintained by the first article of the Belgic constitution¹, in the same manner and terms that it was provided for by the old fundamental law of the Netherland's kingdom, by which the intimate union of Luxemburg and the other Belgic provinces was put beyond a question. This being the case, and Belgium being desirous to enter into the strictest bonds of amity with Germany, what can it matter, we ask once more, to the Confederation whether Luxemburg belongs to Holland or to Belgium? There may not be any strict parallel between the two cases, although there is a strong analogy; but we beg to observe that the Serene Diet has very recently given its sanction to the principle of popular revolt in one of its own body; for it did not hesitate to recognise the accession of Duke William of Brunswick, when his elder brother, Duke Charles, was compelled to abandon the

¹ The first article of the Belgic Constitution runs thus: — Belgium is divided into provinces. These provinces are Antwerp etc. etc. etc., and Luxemburg, saving (*sauf*) the connection of the latter with the Germanic Confederation.

hereditary dominions of his ancestors, through the same medium—the medium of popular will—that expelled King William, not from his hereditary dominions, but from those over which he had been appointed ruler by a recent treaty.

The indisputable right of the inhabitants of Limburg and Luxemburg to be considered as Belgians and to be treated in the same manner as the remaining population of that country is founded, as we have shown, upon solemn conventions of a remote date. To this it may be replied that Luxemburg ought to be ceded to the King of Holland, because it was made over to His Majesty by the treaty of Vienna, as a compensation for his hereditary German dominions. But we have likewise shown that His Majesty and his second son, Prince Frederic, by and with the sanction of the *agnats* of his house, consented to receive an indemnity for all claims upon this province by accepting an equivalent in North Brabant, and this, with the avowed object of precluding any future dismemberment of the Belgic provinces. But were this not the case, it would not affect the main question. The question of the *vox populi, vox Dei*, which was admitted in all its force when the Germanic Confederation and the great Powers acknowledged that the Duke of Brunswick and Charles X. were dispossessed of their hereditary dominions by a power against

which there was no appeal, and thereupon recognised their successors, who were named and appointed by the people. We state results, without being desirous to discuss causes.

Supposing, however, that the King of Holland had unfortunately incurred the implacable ill-will of his hereditary subjects, as he did that of the inhabitants of Limburg and Luxemburg, and had these subjects risen up in arms, and driven him from his hereditary states, could Europe have drawn the sword, in order to replace him upon the throne; or would she have abandoned him as she did Charles X. the Duke of Brunswick, and Don Miguel? The answer cannot be doubtful. Europe would have treated His Netherland's Majesty in the same manner that she acted towards the other monarchs, whom she left to their fate. It is against all logic and reason, we affirm, to state that a part shall be admitted and a part refused; for, to declare to certain provinces of Belgium, that they have a right to rebel, because the house of Nassau has no claims whatever upon them resulting from past ages, and at the same time to announce to Limburg and Luxemburg that they are to be made over as hereditary heir-looms to King William, is to declare that France and Brunswick ought to take back their hereditary sovereigns, and that the French and Brunswick people are still in overt hostility with the principles of lawful and legitimate possession, which principles, as regards

these people, have been set aside by the general fiat of Europe. But the truth is that the house of Nassau has infinitely less claim upon Limburg and Luxemburg than the elder branch of the Bourbons has upon France ; for the rights of the latter had been consecrated from time immemorial, and would still have been held sacred, had Charles X. pursued a different course ; but the rights of King William were those of the day, and arose not from long established antecedents, but from the circumstance of his being created sovereign of those provinces of which Luxemburg had long formed an integral part.

But, if any one has a right to speak of a claim of inheritance, it is most certainly neither Holland nor her sovereign. It comes with a very awkward grace from Holland to dispute the right of Limburg and Luxemburg to remain a part of Belgium, when it is borne in mind that, by a revolution in the 17th century, Holland snapped asunder the ties which united her to Belgium and the Spanish monarchy. Setting aside the consideration of the ancient nationality of Belgium, the rights of the inhabitants of Limburg and Luxemburg are founded upon the same principle as the nationality of Holland. In 1830, the seventeen provinces dissolved themselves by the same right and by the same means as in 1600 : what Holland was able to effect in the beginning of the seventeenth century, Belgium and with her

Limburg and Luxemburg have done in the nineteenth. Did Holland, in 1648, consent to pay any part of the debt of Spain, or to give up a part of her territory to the latter kingdom? Strange contradiction! Holland disputes, at the present day an origin identical with her own; and what she considered decidedly wrong in her own case, is, it would seem, perfectly right in the case of Belgium, or rather in that of Limburg and Luxemburg.

Let it be remembered that Luxemburg and Limburg not only rose in arms and united with the remainder of their Belgic brethren in emancipating themselves from the dominion of Holland, but that the King himself of his own accord ratified and consecrated their separation from his Dutch dominions¹ and that the deputies of Luxemburg were consequently refused admittance to the States General in the session of 1830². If also the ardent wishes of the people themselves can have any weight, let it likewise be understood, 1st, that the Limburg and Luxemburg representatives as well as the Provincial States have solemnly protested against the projected dismemberment of the pro-

¹ See the Message from the Throne, 13th September, 1830; the Vote of the Dutch Chambers in consequence thereof; and the Proclamation of the Prince of Orange, of the 5th October, 1830; all recognising and establishing the separation.

² This fact has already been alluded to. The motive assigned for the refusal was that they were foreigners no longer forming a portion of the national (Dutch) representation.

vinces whence they issued their mandate¹; 2dly, that the whole of the parishes, in fact the whole population, have spontaneously followed their example, and to such an extent that the Government in lieu of finding it necessary to stimulate this patriotic and fraternal feeling has been compelled to employ every means of persuasion to calm the effervescence and to restrain the ebullition of popular feeling within moderate bounds. Such being the case, it is not too much to expect that these wishes, these universal opinions, should be permitted to weigh in the scale, if not as an act of direct humanity, at all events as a consideration of prospective policy.

Since the period when the treaty of November was drawn up, an immense alteration has taken place in the situation of Belgium, and the question to which was naturally attached such immense importance is better understood and appreciated. The principles of those who looked beyond the day and who studied the future, have since then been developed and participated in by many others. The allies of Belgium now comprehend the necessity, the absolute necessity, of rendering her as strong and independent as the nature of her posi-

¹ The Provincial States (*Etats-Provinceaux*) are composed of deputies, elected by the different districts of each province, who meet to discuss and vote all questions of finance and administration regarding their respective provinces. Their assemblies are presided at by the civil Governor, who holds a position somewhat similar to the English Lords-Lieutenant.

tion will admit. Great Britain, who well knows the value of alliances, must feel convinced that she has not a more faithful and sincere ally upon the Continent than Belgium. The sincerest alliances are those that result from necessity ; and Belgium is well aware that England is the most firm and disinterested upholder of her nationality. When Belgium turned her eyes to Great Britain and asked her for a king, she proved her confidence in and respect for the British nation ; and the consent of the latter is a corresponding proof that the welfare of Belgium was not a matter of indifference¹. England, therefore, will surely not consent to impoverish and weaken an ally from whom she derives important commercial advantages, in order to enrich and strengthen another ally whose grand object it must be to undermine that barrier of which she proved herself a most inefficient guardian.

But, if Great Britain has a material interest in the consolidation of Belgium, in a manner conformable to the wishes, wants and resources of the latter, France is equally interested in the same consummation. Connected by a strong affinity of customs, language, views and opinions ; connected by the strongest of all bonds — the necessity of mutual aid and assistance in the event of any unjust

¹ For the details of the negotiations relative to the election of King Leopold, see *White's Belgic Revolution*, vol. II. p. 267.

aggression—France has already shown her readiness to hasten to the succour of Belgium in the hour of need. She has done this not perhaps out of mere sympathy, but in her own defence, and with the still more laudable determination of maintaining general peace. France well knows that, in the event of any crusade against her liberties, the Belgian army and Belgian fortresses would be placed at her disposal in the same manner that the army of France and the fleet of Great Britain were employed in support of Belgium when those two Powers determined that the young independence of the latter should not be trampled under foot. French statesmen, and, above all, the clear-sighted and sagacious monarch to whose prudence Europe is mainly indebted for the preservation of tranquillity, are too well acquainted with the importance of maintaining intact the Belgic territory,—especially that portion which is contiguous to Metz, Longwy and Thionville,—to allow them to look with indifference upon the dismemberment of Luxemburg. Other considerations of paramount importance, both as regards the financial and territorial question, but which it would be superfluous to detail, all tend to the same object as regards France.

Such being the case, it is the duty as it is the sincere desire and intention of the Belgian government to await the issue with calmness and confidence, but not without adopting such precautions as the nature of circumstances may require.

She may pursue this course from a conviction that the Conference, although it may have been seduced into error, was constantly animated with the highest sentiments of equity, and that its members cannot but be impressed with the knowledge that it would be a most useless and perilous policy to attempt to replace the old barrier by another a thousand times more feeble ; not feeble in itself, but from the weight unnecessarily imposed upon it.

Belgium may remain calm ; for whom has she to fear ? Austria and Russia, unless through the previous operations of a war, are too far removed to offer any cause of alarm. Prussia has enough upon her hands at the present moment to prevent her occupying herself with the internal affairs of other states. The Germanic Confederation, though admirably organized for defence, is infinitely less powerful as an aggressor, even is if were as intimately convinced of the policy and necessity of tearing Luxemburg from Belgium as we are convinced of the contrary. Belgium we may also affirm has more to hope than to fear from the sovereigns whose plenipotentiaries compose the Conference, and especially from those of Queen Victoria and the King of the French : indeed, as regards the Government of the latter, one might safely predict that no French minister would sanction an invasion of Luxemburg, without being forthwith compelled to resign office.

The pure and simple execution of the treaty of November seems therefore to be uncalled for, unjust, and indeed impracticable. A new treaty, as demanded by Belgium, appears to be inevitable. Nor are its pretensions or claims exaggerated: all it demands is a just and equitable partition of the debt and a different solution of the territorial question, in compensation for which latter, and in order to contribute as far as possible to the consolidation of peace, it would doubtless not object to make important pecuniary sacrifices, not as a right, but as a concession.

But we will conclude with the following summary: —

In November, 1831, when the reaction and hostility against the principles of popular insurrection were rife throughout Europe, but more especially in all the trans-Rhenan states, the Conference imposed upon Belgium what the latter considered very grievous sacrifices, under the most formal understanding that *an immediate solution*† and termination to the state of war should ensue, even although Holland should commence by refusing her assent. But when the Conference was urged to execute the treaty, and

† The Dutch assert that no such guarantee exists upon the face of the treaty or accompanying protocols. Let any impartial person pay attention to the simple facts we have adduced, or merely refer to the context and purport of the treaty, and then say whether such a denegation be well founded.

thus to fulfil its engagements, it drew back, and thus in shrinking from its new obligations indisputably released Belgium from hers; for the result of this withdrawal was to leave only one party under the influence of the treaty, and that party Belgium herself¹.

If therefore the Dutch cabinet has systematically disavowed and protested against the 24 Articles, from 1831 to a very recent period, and if the Conference guaranteed its execution at a time when that execution might have been in some measure softened, though it could not have compensated Belgium for the sacrifices imposed on her, how is it that the latter can be equitably expected to adhere to a treaty thus abandoned and left incomplete by all the other parties connected therewith.

Belgium has now not only assumed her ancient independent position, but has improved it; for her King, through the medium of his family alliances and the elevated place he occupies in the opinions of all European cabinets, has doubly strengthened the situation of his people and given them the indisputable right to treat with other nations upon a footing of equality, not as a vanquished nation seeking a boon, but as a free people claiming a right.

¹ In common law and equity the nonfulfilment of a contract by any collateral party would justify an action and verdict of nullity.

It has been proved that the Conference has been misled and has fallen into errors of a nature most prejudicial to Belgium; errors not resulting from erroneous documents furnished by the latter, but proceeding from incorrect estimates guaranteed as exact by the adverse party. Now, errors, whether as relate to public or private accounts, cannot be looked upon as squaring a balance: revision and redress are invariably accorded to the aggrieved party. Why, therefore, should Belgium be excluded from the benefits of this every-day rule?

The same maxim may be applied to the territorial question; but enough has been said upon that point, not only to show the injustice, but the difficulty and future danger of enforcing the clauses of the treaty as regards Luxemburg and Limburg.

The Belgians, therefore, rely and are defensible in relying upon the justice of their cause. They know that the motives of the Conference are equitable and honorable and that amidst so many conflicting arguments and calculations it is no easy task to come to such an award as will satisfy both parties: but they nevertheless feel convinced that the Conference will not convert an unpremeditated error into an act of perpetual injustice, and thus fly in the face of those principles that have formed the avowed basis and purport of their labours.

Strong in the soundness of her cause, Belgium

appeals to the justice of Kings and people. She appeals to the justice of the august son of the Emperor Francis her last *legitimate* monarch. She appeals to the wisdom and equity of the King of the French, who has already shown her various proofs of his sympathy, and none greater than by granting her his beloved and virtuous daughter, that she might become, as she has become, not only the Queen, but the beloved mother of her people. She appeals to the equity of their King's niece, Queen Victoria, the young, the adored Sovereign of that great nation whose interest it is to cultivate the amity of the appellant party. In short, she appeals to the good sense and equity of all impartial and generous-minded men, whether amongst the councils or representatives of Great Britain and France, and begs to remind them that whilst occupied in their humane attempts to ameliorate the condition of the negroes, they ought not to forget that a portion of the white population of the Continent confidently trust to their generous protection.

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Du Mortier, Barthélemy-Charles,
Belgium and the twenty-four Articles

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